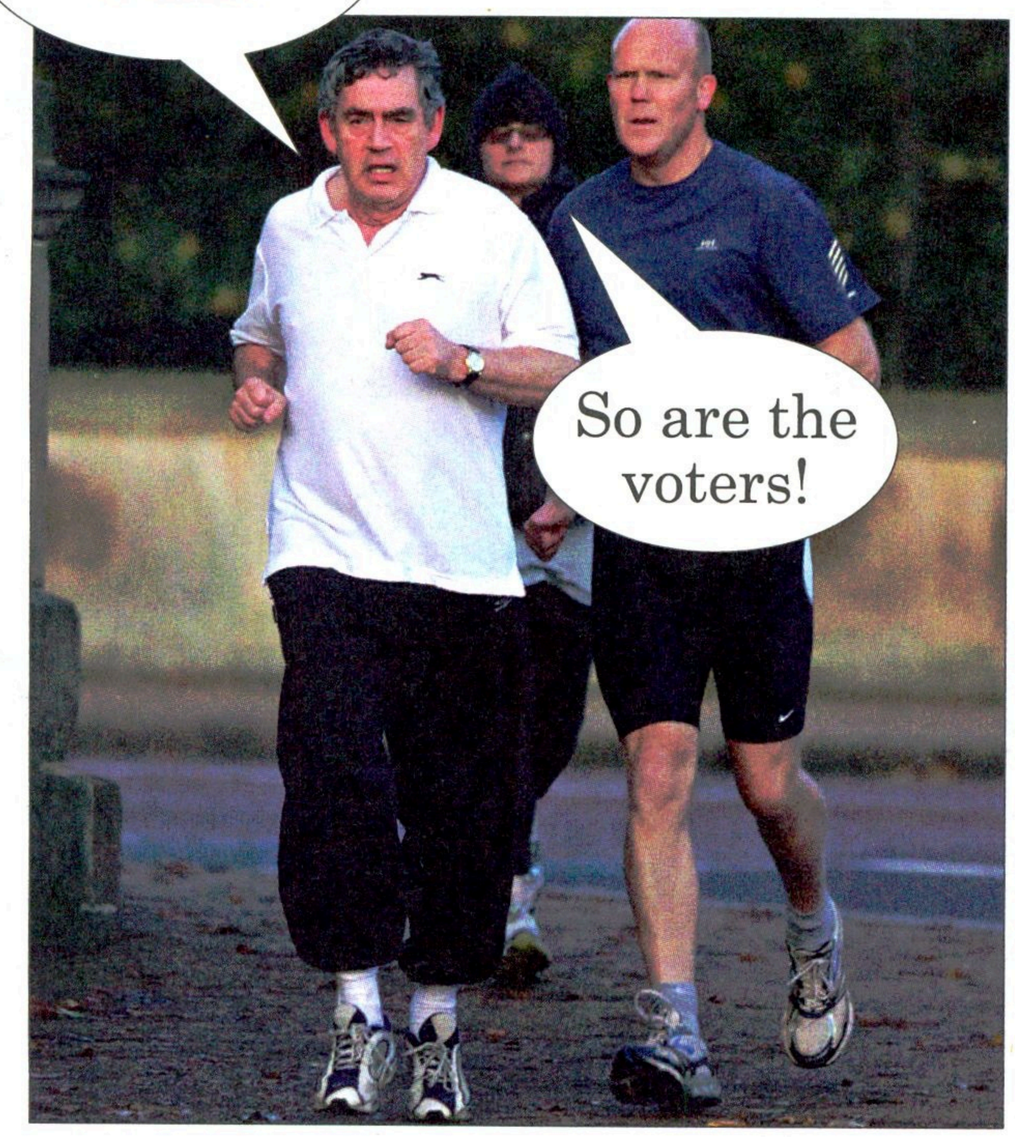
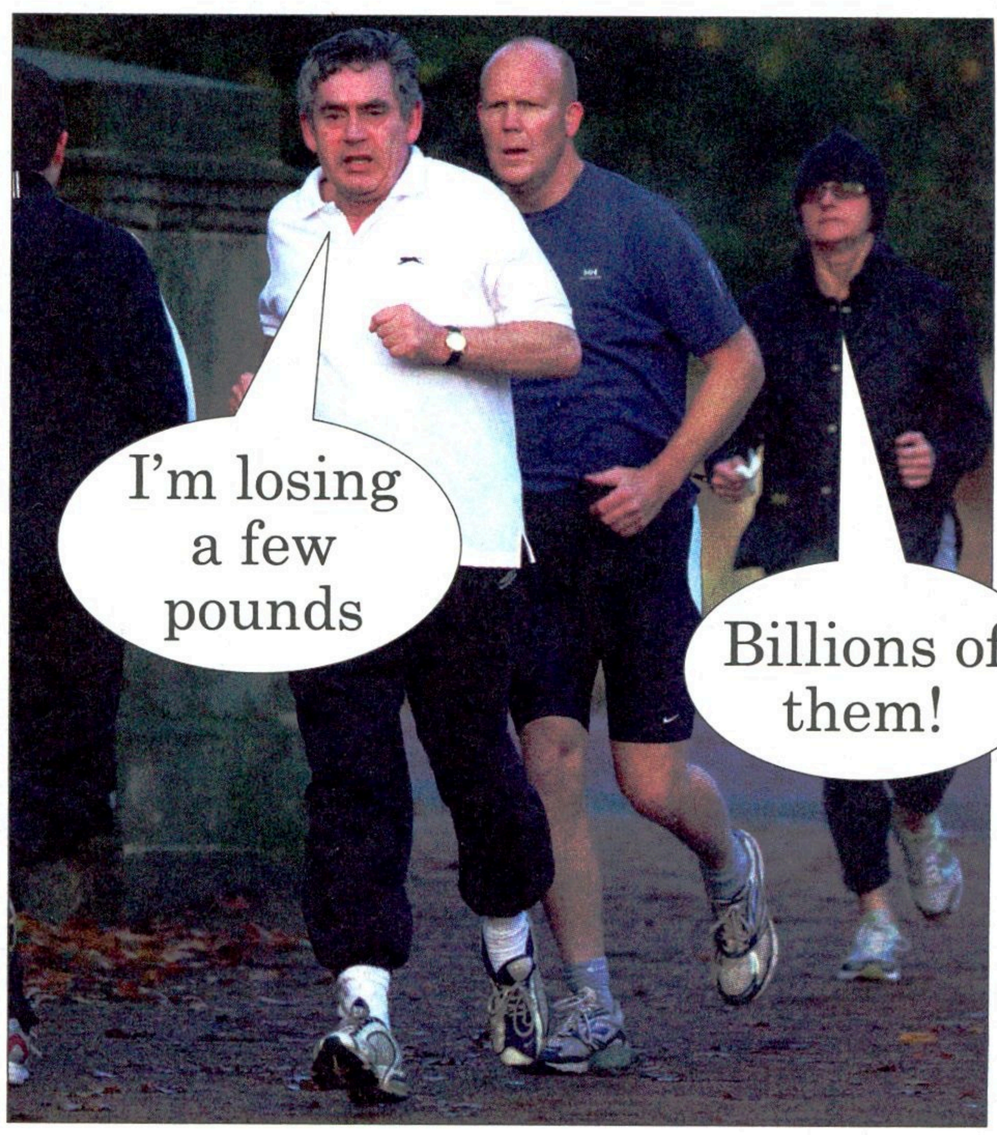
PRIVATE EYE

No. 1249
13 November –
26 Nov. 2009
£1.50

BROWN JOGGING SHOCK





General Insurance

Life Insurance

Risk Management

All our bodywork repairs come with a three-year warranty. By then your son might have learnt to drive properly.

Zurich HelpPoint™ is here when you need more than just insurance. If your car needs to be repaired after an accident, you want to know it will be repaired properly. So the fact that all bodywork done by our approved repair network comes with a three-year warranty should give you confidence. More than you have in your son's driving anyway. For more information, visit www.zurich.co.uk

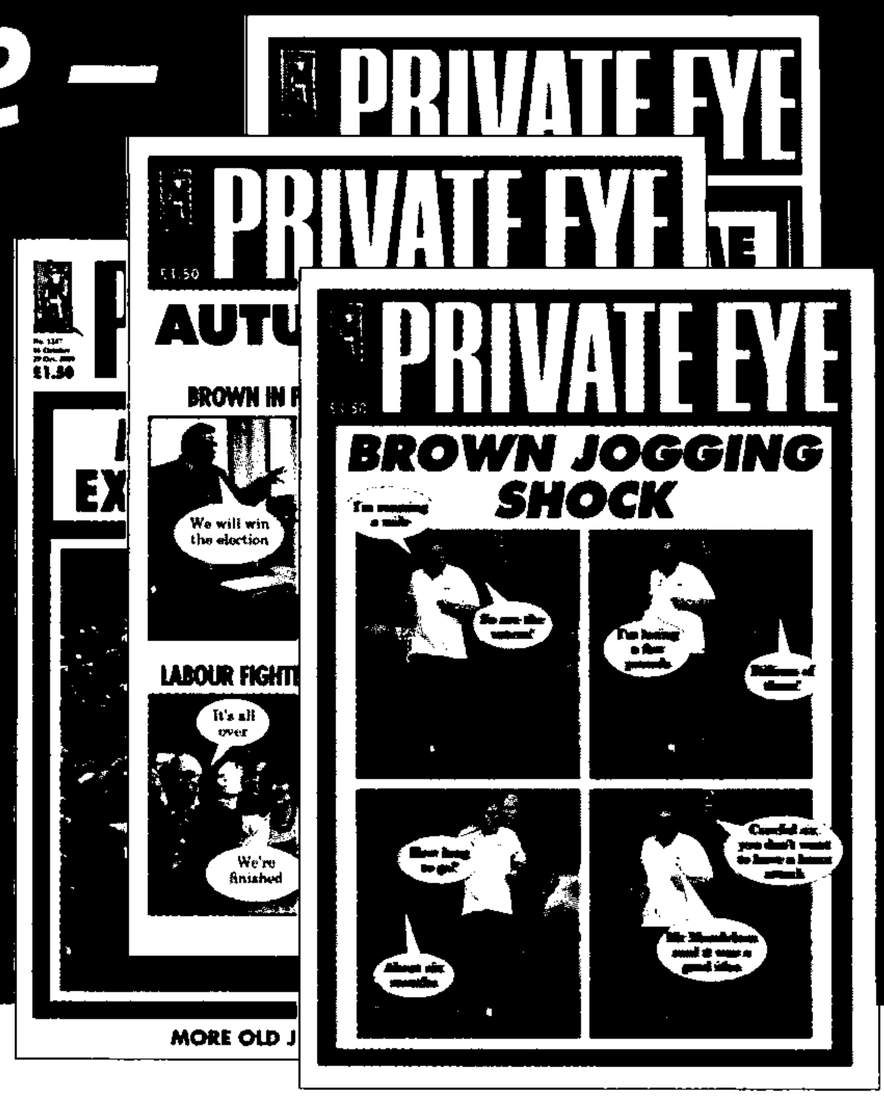
Here to help your world.

ZURICH®

Because change happenz®

Conditions apply. Underwritten by Zurich Insurance plc.

Private Eye Magazine – The Perfect Christmas Gift!



SAVE £11

with this Private Eye subscription offer! *Plus* we'll give you a pack of 12 exclusive CARTOON CHRISTMAS CARDS **WORTH £8**

Private Eye is the UK's biggest selling news and current affairs magazine.

It's packed with a wealth of news, current affairs, spoofs, cartoons send-ups and parodies!

Buying as a gift? Reply by 27 November 2009 and we will send you a Gift Card to personalise. The gift subscription will start with the first issue in the New Year.

FOR STRESS-FREE SHOPPING ORDER NOW!

at www.subsonline.co.uk

or call 01795 414 870

SUBSCRIBE AND RECEIVE FREE CARTOON CHRISTMAS CARDS (Source code N1249)

☐ Yes! I would like to give a gift subscription of Private Eye and receive my FREE Cartoon Christmas cards **(worth £8)**

YOUR DETAILS (essential)
(The FREE Cartoon Christmas Cards and a Christmas gift card will be sent to you.)

Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms Forename

Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

We need your email address to send order confirmation. Gift purchasers will receive confirmation by post. Giving us your email address will also ensure that you receive our best offers. Private Eye is serious about protecting your privacy and we will not share or sell data about you.

GIFT RECIPIENT DETAILS
(All gift subscriptions will start with the first issue in the New Year, published 8th January 2010.)

Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms Forename

Surname

Address

Postcode

YOUR PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ UK 1 YEAR £28

☐ EUROPE/EIRE £34

☐ Rest of World £38

❶ ☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to Private Eye

❷ ☐ Please charge £_____ to my:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

☐ Maestro (Issue No.)

Card Number

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Maestro only ☐☐☐

Valid from ☐☐ ☐☐ Expiry date ☐☐ ☐☐

Signature

Date

How to reply

Complete this form and send to: **Private Eye Subscriptions, PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA**

Call:
01795 414 870
(please quote source code below)
Overseas customers please call +44 (0) 1795 414 870

Online:
www.subsonline.co.uk

Please note our Christmas cards are very popular and we only print a limited stock. Orders must be received by 27th November to guarantee delivery of the cards before Christmas. Offer ends 08/12/2009. We reserve the right to offer an alternative gift if Christmas card stock is finished.
The minimum subscription term is 12 months and non-refundable.

Source code N1249

Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km): Ford ECOnetic range (Fiesta, Focus, Mondeo): urban 40.9-61.4 (6.9-4.6), extra urban 62.8-88.3 (4.5-3.2 combined 52.3-76.3* (5.4-3.7). Official CO_2 emission 98-142g/km. 76.3mpg refers to combined cycle.

We all like to feel that we're saving a little.

Which is exactly the reason why Ford designed ECOnetic. With the clever application of technology, you can now achieve fuel efficiency like 76.3mpg* on the Fiesta, and reduced CO_2 emissions from only 98g/km. This now means that our ECOnetic models are kinder on your pocket and on the environment.
Visit www.fordeconetic.co.uk

FordECOnetic

Feel the difference

For all the latest information on the Government scrappage scheme visit www.ford.co.uk/scrappageincentive

Ford

Fit for purpose

- Phone hacking: Myler the Misleading 7
- More drivel from Sir Gush O'Donnell 8
- Ollyl Nestlé palms off the greens 9
- Who let the dogs out? Coupwatch 17
- Rise of the munchkins: Ant & Dec 26
- Nimrod crash: All the MoD's cons 28
- Privatisation's raw (sewage) deal 29

WHAT on earth prompted Gordon Brown to advocate a tax on financial transactions – the so-called "Tobin tax" – in his speech to G20 finance ministers last weekend? Critics and supporters alike seem to have been equally gobsmacked by this sudden fit of boldness.

It's not as if the Tobin tax is a cause dear to Gordy's heart; in fact he believes it's a non-starter. Back in May 2002, as chancellor, he told MPs that the tax "has very substantial drawbacks" since it couldn't be introduced without unanimous international agreement. Two months later, when Brown told a Lords committee that the Tobin tax had "big problems attached to it", his adviser Ed Balls added that it wouldn't reduce the risk of financial crises.

After last autumn's financial meltdown, the Labour left-winger Alan Simpson revived the idea. "Will he take the lead in looking at the opportunities to introduce a Tobin tax?" he asked at PMQs on 10 December 2008. "There are many proposals to deal with the reform of international financial institutions," Brown replied. "One such proposal is the Tobin tax, which has been found by many people who have looked at it not to be implementable."

As recently as this August, when the financial regulator Lord Turner advocated a Tobin tax, he was not only rubbished by the City but also slapped down by the Treasury, who said his proposal was not supported by Alistair Darling or Brown.

So why endorse it now? The clue can be found on that day last December when he rebuffed Simpson – it was the same PMQs at which he claimed to have "saved the world". This was reported at the time as a slip of the tongue (he meant to say, more modestly, that he'd "saved the world's banks"), but it's a pretty fair summary of how Brown sees himself. For a while, he could pose half-plausibly as the global leader on financial issues.

His speech on Saturday – and the spin put on it – was a desperate attempt to regain that leadership status. It would win him plaudits from Sarkozy and Merkel, and it just might tempt the Obama administration. If the tax were eventually adopted – why, it might be known as the Brown tax rather than the Tobin!

He duly got rave reviews from Will Hutton in the *Observer* and Larry Elliott in the *Guardian* – but also firm put-downs from the IMF, the Russians and the United States. ("A day-by-day financial transactions tax is not something we are prepared to support.") And, er, that was that. The story of Brown's career: a brief moment of boldness, followed by a hasty, grim-faced retreat.

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.
Tel: 020 7437 4017. Fax: 020 7437 0705.
Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk
Website: www.private-eye.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 01795 414 870
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Web: www.subsonline.co.uk
Email: private-eye@servicehelpline.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£28 per annum. Europe and Eire £34. Airmail (rest of world) £38.
Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Ten Alps Publishing, 1 New Oxford Street,
High Holborn, London WC1A 1NU.
Email: private-eye@tenalpspublishing.com
Display: 020 7878 2366 **Classified:** 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by COMAG Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QE. Tel 01895 433600.

ABC

THE £40bn bailout No 2 for Lloyds Banking Group and RBS is more great news for the bankers whose behaviour necessitated it. The convoluted share issues and insurance schemes required to keep the banks technically in the private sector when a more honest nationalisation would have been cheaper in the long run mean bumper paydays all round.

Two weeks ago City minister Lord Myners got his defence in early, claiming he had knocked down the investment bankers' fees on the forthcoming Lloyds fundraising from £300m to a mere £200m. The taxpayer will cough up smaller but no doubt handsome fees on the RBS deal, too. Many of the beneficiaries will be the same banks that have advised on the bailout and are now heavily represented on the board of the government body responsible for these banks, UK Financial Investments.

The government's refusal to nationalise the banks, even temporarily, limits the action UKFI can take against huge bonuses even if it wanted to. The share price has to be kept up in the short term, and that means business more or less as usual.

Hence news arrives almost daily of the taxpayer's bank RBS acting against the interests of taxpayers but in the interests of short-term profit. While it slashes thousands of jobs in Scotland, it exports to India IT jobs that the laid-off staff could have been trained for. And last week its Coutts subsidiary announced expansion in that well-known motor of the British economy, er, Monaco, in order to help rich Russians and East Europeans avoid tax.

NON-SEQUITUR OF THE WEEK

"Do I go around pinching bottoms? Certainly not. I'm a Conservative."

– Sir Nicholas Winterton

"MAKE Sir Fred Pay" yelled the *Daily Mail* last Wednesday after the latest bail-out of Sir Fred Goodwin's former bank. "Isn't it beyond belief that he and his team are enjoying fabulous pensions – funded by the rest us?"

"It's shrunk again"

But seizing his pension wasn't enough. According to the *Mail*, "Sir Fred and his ilk should be spending their retirement behind bars." What offence has he committed, grave enough to merit a life sentence? It did not say. But he should be locked up anyway, whether or not he's broken any law, for the crime of being Fred the Shred.

This is a louder and bolder version of Harriet Harman's proposal, made in March, that Sir Fred's pension should be confiscated even though it had been agreed in a legally binding contract. And what did the *Mail* make of that?

"A Chilling Threat to the Rule of Law" was the headline on its editorial of 2 March. "Is Ms Harman seriously suggesting ministers should change the law retrospectively, to allow them to confiscate money from Sir Fred, just because he is widely loathed?"

THE *Guardian* is in a tizz about British banks again, complaining in a leader that Government reforms are "fudge" instead of a proper shake-up.

Ministers should have "unveiled much bolder plans a long time ago", it adds. "Because the truth is that high-street banking is fast becoming an oligopoly, with the gigantic Lloyds group now in charge of one in every four savings accounts."

And who is one of the non-executive directors of this oligopolistic monster? Step forward Carolyn McCall, chief executive of Guardian Media Group.

NEWS that a local landowner has volunteered to sacrifice a swathe of the greenbelt to the west of Bath to accommodate 2,000 new homes would normally be enough to have Prince Charles, countryside lover and outspoken enemy of "carbuncles", frothing at the mouth that it "really is appalling".

The loss of the greenbelt would mean hundreds of acres of organically farmed wheat and rapeseed would have to go, along with the deer, buzzards, kestrels and hares that share the land. But there hasn't been a squeak from Brian – possibly because the landowner who suggested re-zoning the farmland for housing is none other than, er, Prince Charles himself.

Despite protests from many of its tenants, the Duchy of Cornwall is keen to push ahead with the plan – not least because agricultural land in the area is worth around £5,500 per hectare, whereas land with planning permission for homes can be worth 10 or 20 times more.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Their world class workforce nurtures talent, helping people to progress and business to build for the future."

– Department for Business, Innovation and Skills announces Colleges Week, to run from 9-15 November

"Behind the scenes they are preparing some £350m of cuts for 2010-11 that will slash the number of training places on offer by hundreds of thousands."

– Papers leaked to the Observer *reveal drastic cuts planned for further education colleges, 8 November.*

● *See High Principals, p. 30*

Street of Shame

KATIE PRICE and Peter Andre are usually grateful for any old rubbish that gets them on to the front pages. But is the Team Katie v Team Peter brawl threatening the special relationship between Richard "Dirty" Desmond and his favourite subjects?

Confused hacks at the *Daily Star* who are used to inventing copy about the pair were suddenly ordered last week to run the following item:

"On 25 August 2009 we published an article headed 'Jordan's New Baby Shock' stating that a source had claimed that three positive pregnancy tests had been found in Katie Price's home. We also pointed out that Jordan's spokesperson denied she was pregnant. We are happy to set the record straight and clarify that Katie Price was not pregnant at the time our source claimed the tests were found and apologise to her."

Is Dirty Des – who regularly flies Katie to photoshoots and TV filming sessions in his private jet – leaning on his editors to protect his other interests? This of course is the very accusation that he strenuously denied, on oath, during his disastrous recent libel battle with Tom Bower. The CPS has yet to reveal if it intends to charge him with perjury.

"HOWLS of anguish rang through the subsidised bars of the Commons yesterday as MPs read the leaks of Sir Christopher Kelly's plan to crack down on their expenses," thundered a leader in the *Daily Mail* on 29 October.

"Spluttered Tory veteran Roger Gale: 'I just don't believe that Kelly lives in the real world!' Really, Mr Gale? Perhaps you'll tell us, then, where in the real world can those who live within an hour of work expect to be provided with a second home, free of charge?"

Er, how about at the *Daily Mail*? As *Eye* readers will recall, for many years the *Mail* paid for its editor, Paul Dacre, to have a London flat – despite the fact he owned a house an hour away in Sussex. The perk, costing upwards of £50,000 a year, was declared in the annual report. Even now Dacre collects a similar sum – on top of his £1.1m salary – "instead of the company providing Central London accommodation".

ALTHOUGH *Guardian* readers may imagine that eco-columnist George Monbiot writes his copy on recycled autumn leaves that are then composted for a month before being sent in by carrier pigeon, in fact he's a tech-addict who becomes tetchy if deprived of his fix.

Hence the huffy email he sent to the *Grauniad* technical department when a few computer problems weren't solved instantly: "Are you going to ignore my requests for ever, or will I get a reply without having to take this right to the top?"

An IT manager politely replied that the department was dealing with his inquiry. He also pointed out that the Moonbat had accidentally sent his email to a "global" address – which meant the paper's entire staff witnessed his temper tantrum.

Meanwhile John Vidal, environment editor of the *Grauniad* and author of many a green-hearted article about the calamitous consequences of air travel, has so many foreign trips planned that he has been issued with a second passport to help him with all the simultaneous visa applications.

The globe-girdling hack is admirably unembarrassed. "I only travel for work," he says. "I'm on planetary duty."

"WHAT has happened to our country?" wailed the *Daily Express* over the front-page news that "a teenage yob stamped a puppy to death in front of its owner". "Social commentators warned that such behaviour was only symptomatic of the wider problem of Britain's hooligan culture."

"The *Sun* today offers £2,500 for the capture of the savage hoodies who killed Sandy the tiny Jack Russell puppy," roared that paper the following morning. "We put up reward posters offering the sum to anyone who provides information leading to the arrest and conviction of one or more of the evil trio."

Not to be outdone the *Express* did an emergency run to the pet shop: "The girl whose puppy was stamped to death by a teenage thug spoke of her joy yesterday after being given a new dog – thanks to the *Daily Express*. Poppy is a seven-week-old Jack Russell-Yorkshire terrier cross. We wish them many happy years together."

So how did these canine avengers react when Cambridgeshire police announced on 2 November that they were dropping their investigation after "a detailed veterinary medical examination" revealed Sandy had died of a viral infection, and vets had found "no sign of injury"? They, er, ignored it completely. The only newspaper to carry the story was the *Cambridge Evening News*. So what exactly has happened to our country?

"SO where did it all go wrong, Jenson?" asked the *Daily Mirror* on 30 October, filling page three with pictures of the new Formula One champion and his model girlfriend Jessica Michibata on board a yacht in Dubai.

Curiously, the accompanying news story made no mention of the fact that Button and Michibata were pictured in all three photos prominently clutching a soft drink called Monster Energy. For good measure, Button was wearing a Monster Energy baseball cap as well.

Nor did the *Mirror* tell its readers that the photos were paid for by Monster Energy and supplied free to national titles via photo agency LAT Photographic. Even in these cash-strapped times, most papers baulked at the prospect of using snaps which featured such blatant product placement. But the *Mirror* was not quite alone. The cash-strapped *Independent* also used one of the freebie snaps on its main sports page without telling readers it was paid for by Monster Energy.

"A WOMAN getting uncontrollably drunk used to prompt morning-after feelings of remorse," pointed out *Sun* columnist Jane Moore on the second day of the paper's campaign against the violent antics of binge-drinking women, a series which unaccountably failed to run during Rebekah Wade's editorship. "These days many see it as a badge of honour."

And how! "Amy Winehouse was back to her bongoed best at yesterday's Q Awards," enthused showbiz editor Gordon Smart the very same day. "Organisers of the boozy bash provided the sozzled songbird with her own private chamber… Camden Caner Amy was on good form."

Oops! Perhaps remembering Smart's warning of 17 June, that "Amy Winehouse's parents have pleaded with her to stop drinking before it kills her", sub-editors pulled his adulatory prose from the paper, replacing it with a large picture of the relatively sober Lily Allen at the ceremony instead. The story only ran on the paper's website – which must have come as a blow to the hapless Smart, who had taken advantage of the state Winehouse was in to persuade her to join the dwindling band of celebrities willing to pose for a photograph with their arm round him.

WITH *The London Paper* already dead and *London Lite* booked into the Dignitas clinic, the *Evening Standard* will soon have a monopoly in the capital. But how long before the *Standard* itself is carted off by the undertakers?

Editor Geordie Greig and his fun-loving Russian bosses, Lebedev *père et fils*, are still partying as if it's 1999. The invitations sent out by Geordie last week to a bash celebrating London's "1,000 Most Influential People" give a new meaning to the word "stiffy": they're thick enough to stop a KGB assassin's bullet. The

"It's really bugging me – is this flotsam or jetsam?"

implicit message is clear enough: the *Evening Standard* may now be free, but it's not cheap.

The paper's relaunch as a freesheet is certainly proving very costly. It was already expecting to lose about £10m this year; now it's losing an additional £15m from cover-price revenue. And, from next month, it'll miss out on the £5m annual subscription that *London Lite* was paying for the use of the *Standard*'s news service. Tot them all up and you have a £30m deficit this year, without even including the extra cost of paying people to hand out the new freesheet. (In the pre-freebie days, the paper-sellers were self-financing.) The only way Alexander Lebedev could recover that revenue would be by tripling the advertising rate – possibly not a good idea in the middle of an advertising recession.

When Lebedev bought the *Standard* he had to put £25m in an escrow account as proof of his commitment to the paper. At that time it was losing about £8m, so the fund would have just about covered the losses for three years; now it isn't even enough for one year. Some executives at Associated Newspapers doubt that Lebedev will keep pouring money down this financial drain for long. They are biding their time on the assumption that the *Standard* won't survive beyond the end of next year – whereupon they'll re-enter the London market with an afternoon edition of their successful if pisspoor morning freesheet. *London Lite* is dead; long live *Metro PM*!

LAST month the *Grauniad* pictured a leaked gallery of 24 protesters from police intelligence files, bragging: "This kind of highly confidential document – pictured above – is rarely seen by the public."

"These so-called 'spotter cards' are issued by police to identify individuals they consider to be potential troublemakers because they have appeared at a number of demonstrations." Evidently a monstrous invasion of personal liberty on the part of the police – but one only seen by so many people because the offence was repeated by, er, the *Guardian*.

Several of the protestors whose pictures appeared on the *Guardian's* front page had been assured that the paper would only print their picture along with an explanation of why they were there, and had been led to believe the paper would pixellate the faces of those who had not given permission for the article to appear. But the *Guardian* ran the story regardless, printing every face clearly.

When several of those who had been contacted angrily wrote to the *Guardian* to complain, they were brushed aside with a pompous email: "We believe that many of the people on that card will be pleased to have now contributed towards exposing and helping to stop this kind of police behaviour." Really?

JUST FANCY THAT

THE *New Statesman* relies heavily on sponsored supplements for what meagre income it can get, and just how desperately it needs the cash can be seen from the sponsors of last month's Copenhagen Climate Conference special – er…Shell, described by Friends of the Earth as "the dirtiest of all major oil companies with regard to CO_2 emissions".

TAPPING RESOURCES

THE Press Complaints Commission apparently took at face value the evidence of *Screws* editor Colin Myler in its report rubbishing the *Guardian*'s exposé of the extent of the *News of the World*'s phone tapping. Unfortunately for the credibility of the PCC, Myler was being highly misleading – as the simplest of checks would have established.

In his statement to the commission, Myler wrote that there was "no evidence of involvement by *NoW* staff other than Clive Goodman in phone message interception beyond the email transcript which emerged in April 2008 during the Gordon Taylor litigation and which has since been revealed in the original *Guardian* report".

Originally the *NoW* maintained that royal editor Goodman – who with private investigator Glenn Mulcaire was jailed in 2007 after admitting hacking the phones of celebs – was the only *Screws* reporter involved in phone hacking. So the email dated 29 June 2005, containing the transcripts of dozens of voicemail messages from the mobiles of two victims and written by a young *Screws* journalist called Ross Hindley for the attention of "Neville", was surely significant – Neville Thurlbeck (*Eyes passim*) being one of the *NoW*'s senior reporters.

But Myler pooh-poohed the email transcript. No one else at the paper could remember receiving it or seeing it, he said. "The email and transcript were created by a junior reporter (who has since left the newspaper). When questioned after the email was supplied to us by Gordon Taylor's lawyers in April 2008, the junior reporter [Hindley] accepted that he had created the relevant email document but had no recollection of it beyond that. Since by the end of June 2005 he had been a reporter for only a week or so (having been promoted "off the floor" where he had been a messenger) and since the first months of his reporting career consisted largely of transcribing tapes for other people, his lack of recollection when questioned three years later is perhaps understandable."

Apart from sidestepping the fact that everyone conveniently "forgetting" the transcript does not explain its existence or contents, Myler's evidence in this respect was wrong.

Ten minutes in the cuttings database of *News of the World* stories reveals that Ross Hindley, the office junior who in June 2005, according to Myler, had a week earlier been a messenger boy, had had his first "additional research" credit in the paper five years earlier, on 30 April 2000, on a story about the first anniversary of the Admiral Duncan pub bombing in Soho. Since 2000 he had had regular bylines of his own, on such stories as "Harman silent on 'dope' son" (1 February 2004), and had been part of the *Screws* reporting team, working with Clive Goodman, on Charles and Camilla's wedding in April 2005. In 2004, while a reporter for the *Romford Recorder*, he had been highly commended in the Essex Young Journalist of the Year awards.

When Myler told the commission that Hindley was "a junior reporter who has since left the newspaper" he was again being misleading, to say the very least. After April 2005 Hindley had more than 50 bylines in the paper until 17 September 2006 – two weeks after Clive Goodman was charged – when they stopped. In the following issue, 24 September 2006, a new byline appeared – that of "Ross Hall", who then had more than 100 credits in the paper up to April 2009, including on big stories such as the Madeleine McCann disappearance. Hall and Hindley are one and the same person – currently on a round-the-world trip with his/their fiancée. Let's hope they remember to send Colin Myler a postcard from New Zealand!

Univesity students: They can't write, spell or present an argument

The Independent

JOURNALISM, LIBEL AND THE LAW

CONGRATULATIONS to Ian Cobain of the *Guardian* who has won the Paul Foot Award for Campaigning Journalism 2009.

Cobain scooped the £6,000 prize for his lengthy investigation into Britain's involvement in the torture of terror suspects detained overseas. *Eye* editor Ian Hislop described his work as "excellent – a real Footy campaign. Dogged pursuit of the uncomfortable but true."

Earlier there had been a pathetic attempt to disrupt the awards ceremony in London's Millbank Tower by lawyers acting for the bent solicitor Shahrokh Mireskandari. Mireskandari was exposed (*see below*) thanks to dogged investigation by Stephen Wright and Richard Pendlebury of the *Daily Mail*, whose work had earned them a place on the Foot Award shortlist. But the crooked lawyer's latest lawyers sent threatening letters saying Wright and Pendlebury's nomination should be struck out forthwith because they had gravely libelled their client. The *Eye* issued the traditional *Arkell v Pressdram 1971* response and ignored them. A good time was then had by all...

WHEN Wright and Pendlebury first revealed that Mireskandari was a convicted fraudster with bogus legal qualifications, the bent solicitor had turned to London's most vainglorious and bullying solicitors, Carter-Fuck, in his search for redress. How sad to report that their relationship has turned so sour that Carter-Fuck is now having to go to law itself, begging the courts to make Mireskandari hand over their outstanding [sic] legal fees!

Carter-Fuck started eagerly enough on Mireskandari's behalf, threatening the *Mail* and warning other newspapers not to follow up its investigation. But then it began to have second thoughts.

Maybe the news that the Law Society had suspended Mireskandari while it investigated accusations of dishonesty and malpractice against him raised some doubts. Perhaps the high court order that Mireskandari must pay £300,000 towards the cost of failed legal actions against the Law Society caused Carter-Fuck to think again. And the accusation from the Solicitors Regulation Authority that Mireskandari had transferred money from clients' accounts can hardly have helped. In any event, Carter-Fuck decided it not only wanted to drop Mireskandari as a client but it also wanted a court order confirming this.

Days after it got its order, Carter-Fuck then billed its ex-client for £150,143.05, with a balance of £118,180.05 due within a month. Mireskandari failed to settle the invoice, Carter-Fuck alleges. So now it is suing him for £118,180.05 as well as interest amounting to £388.65 and continuing interest of £25.91 a day. It couldn't have happened to a nicer legal firm and client...

IN THE midst of all this claim, counter-claim and Carter-Fuckery, *Index on Censorship* and English PEN have just published the findings of their year-long inquiry into defamation law.

The report comes up with ten recommendations for making libel suits less attractive for thin-skinned foreign and domestic claimants. These include capping costs (sure to be popular with the libel tourism specialists at Carter-Fuck); the abolition of the archaic Duke of Brunswick principle – named after the original 19th century libel tourist – which allows foreign claimants to sue in London even if they have only negligible interests in England; and obliging potential suers to prove that they have actually suffered damage as a result of the publication of the articles or blog posts they complain about.

MPs on the Commons culture, media and sport committee are due to publish their own report on the subject in early December. Affronted by Carter-Fuck's recent attempts to stifle the reporting of parliament, they are likely to be as robust as *Index* and PEN in their criticism of super-injunctions, libel tourism and the other paraphernalia of legal Carter-Fuckery.

THE stifling effect of England's oppressive and expensive libel law has now even been felt at Chambers and Partners, the venerable legal publisher.

Michael Chambers, head of the firm, recently decided to replace its dry, stuffy journal for legal pedants with *Client Report*, a hard-hitting magazine which would unearth the law's scandals. He hired good, young reporters and they took to their new jobs keenly.

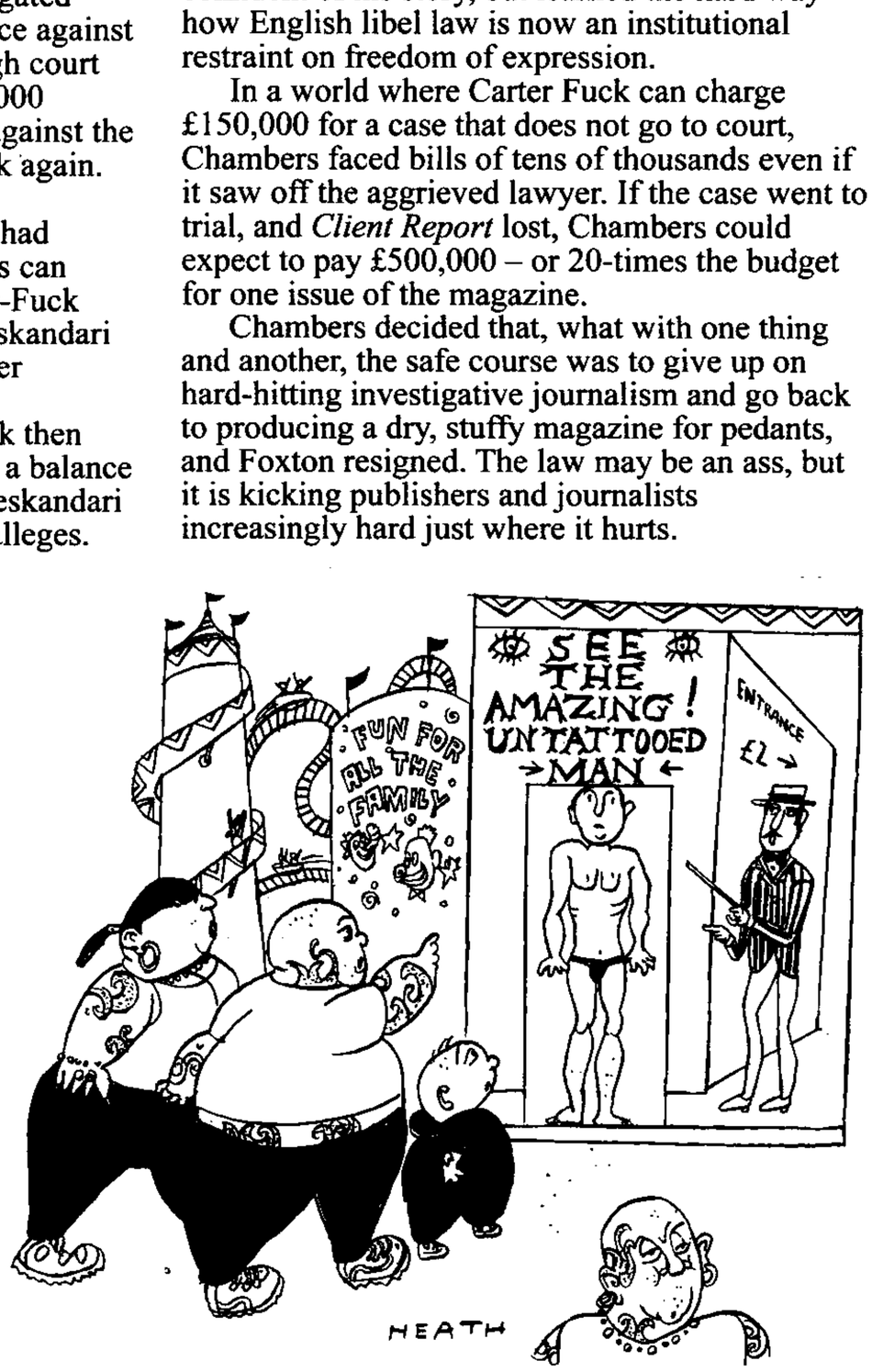
"For a while it all went brilliantly," said Willard Foxton, the editor. *Client Report* ran an exposé on the wretched Andrew Nulty who had become Britain's highest earning lawyer by stealing money from miners dying of lung disease. It was looking into sexism in city firms and, funnily enough, into the practices of Carter-Fuck and London's other libel hounds.

Then it turned its attention to DLA Piper, a global corporate law firm which thought its offer of Islamic finance expertise would allow an aggressive expansion into the Middle East. Alas, its over-ambitious plan faltered and forced the firm to retreat. Its office in Dubai's Emaar Square, which boasted about 120 lawyers in 2008, now houses about 60.

Client Report taped all its interviews and double-sourced every claim it made. DLA Piper didn't complain. Obviously it would have preferred it if *Client Report* had not run with the story, but the firm took it on the chin. However, one lawyer mentioned in the piece sued, alleging that *Client Report* had defamed him. Foxton was confident of his story, but learned the hard way how English libel law is now an institutional restraint on freedom of expression.

In a world where Carter Fuck can charge £150,000 for a case that does not go to court, Chambers faced bills of tens of thousands even if it saw off the aggrieved lawyer. If the case went to trial, and *Client Report* lost, Chambers could expect to pay £500,000 – or 20-times the budget for one issue of the magazine.

Chambers decided that, what with one thing and another, the safe course was to give up on hard-hitting investigative journalism and go back to producing a dry, stuffy magazine for pedants, and Foxton resigned. The law may be an ass, but it is kicking publishers and journalists increasingly hard just where it hurts.



WHEN he was saving the world earlier this year, Gordon Brown earned warm applause from the US Congress for a call to "outlaw offshore tax havens".

As the leader of the country that invented and still owns most of them, he was perhaps best placed to deliver on the ideal. But back at home he was fudging the issue. The fate of Britain's tax havens had already been handed to a tame ex-regulator, Michael Foot, who had been on the payrolls of Guernsey and the Bahamas. Now his report is out and, far from sounding the death knell for havens, it demands nothing stronger than "robust and sensible standards".

The government immediately welcomed the report, Foreign Office minister Chris Bryant drawing on an inglorious history with his endorsement: "The Overseas Territories play a unique – and uniquely British – role, which I want to protect."

These territories include Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands, whose quintessentially British "role" revolves around, er, financial secrecy and tax avoidance and evasion, as countless cases exposed by the *Eye* prove. But their role in tax dodging was "independently" assessed in an accompanying report from Deloitte, which has profitable offices in all the tax havens. The firm concluded that estimates of offshore tax dodging were exaggerated.

This is the same Deloitte whose recent engagements have included setting up tax schemes through Guernsey for the disgraced Rover bosses (see *Eye* 1245) and advising HM Revenue and Customs to sell their offices to Bermuda-based Mapeley (since decamped to Guernsey) – *Eyes passim ad nauseam*.

With the supposed clampdown on tax havens thus culminating in nothing more than a domestic endorsement and a tepid G20 deal on exchanging information, tax havens are safe until the next financial meltdown at the earliest – to the great enrichment of firms such as Deloitte.

● *Deloitte fingered... again: p. 30*

GO-HOME SECRETARY

THE *Eye* didn't need yet another speech from Alan "Turnabout" Johnson last week on immigration to know that power at all costs has triumphed over principle.

Two years ago Johnson, then mere MP for Hull West and Hessle, made a "life or death" appeal to Home Office ministers to intervene in the case of an asylum seeker who had found refuge in his constituency but was facing deportation. To return the man to his country with its dangerous human rights record "would be devastating for him and his family, indeed it could prove fatal", pleaded Johnson. "There are few cases where we need our system to work more than this one."

But last month the 35-year-old was returned to that very country, thanks to none other than Alan Johnson, home secretary and prize hypocrite – according to Labour activists in his constituency (where one has given up his lifelong Labour party membership in protest.)

The move came despite a detailed report prepared by the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture, which concluded that the many scars on the man's head, stomach, legs, soles of his feet, hands and toes were "highly consistent" with his detailed accounts of the torture he had endured as an opposition activist. Because there are genuine fears for his safety, the *Eye* is not identifying the man or his country.

But none of that holds sway with Johnson. He recently wrote a detailed letter to the Rev Mick Fryer, who has campaigned for the asylum seeker to be accepted as a genuine refugee: "Having looked at the case in detail I am satisfied that the proper processes have been followed and that it would be inappropriate for me to intervene in this matter."

The man was living openly in the UK, integrated into society and going through the proper legal processes in the belief that he would be granted refugee status. That is until his former champion turned his back on him. The *Eye* asked Johnson's office about this particular U-turn. Answer came there none.

AGRO-CHEMICAL company Syngenta threw a wobbly after first *Private Eye* and then George Monbiot, writing in the *Guardian*, questioned the wisdom of government-backed bee health researchers accepting funding from a maker of pesticides (see Letters, last *Eye*).

At least someone at the environment ministry seems to have grasped the concept of conflict of interest. Labour MP David Taylor asked whether the researchers would "assess any links that exist between neonicotinoids and the collapse of UK bee colonies", to which Defra junior minister Dan Norris promised the highest possible standards of research, but agreed that "where somebody is paying, one questions whether the research will be reflective of scientific rigour or not".

Er, quite. So why is the government's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council getting into bed with Syngenta?

CALLED TO ORDURE

Sir Gush O'Donnell

MANDARINS have long understood that verbosity is a good weapon against public scrutiny. Sure enough, the latest Cabinet Office annual report is a whopping 211 pages – and this year Whitehall produced more than 4,000 pages of similar annual round-ups.

Cabinet secretary Sir Gus O'Donnell, our top civil servant, was mocked about this forest-flattening output when he appeared before MPs recently. Labour's Tony Wright (Cannock Chase) waved a thick wad of paper in the air and said: "Do you think it is readable?" Sir Gus, with irony: "We win awards for this sort of thing."

Wright turned to page 85 of the report and read an extract: "Savings on the core grant-in-aid delivering the Chane-Up programme, against the counterfactual of an inflationary increase and re-prioritisation of the OTS budget to fund a wider range of investment programmes from the 2007-08 baseline, amount to around £4.8m realised in 2008-09." The baffled Wright gave a birdlike couple of blinks and asked: "Can you understand that?"

Sir Gus, with another smirk: "I can, but that says something sad about me. Years in the Treasury!" He added that "we could simplify the language. We can improve and will." Sure thing.

The job of the Cabinet Office, said Sir Gus, is to "support the prime minister, support the cabinet and strengthen the civil service". A note of sorrow entered his voice as he noted that recent cuts have taken the size of this once-small department from 2,400 staff to 1,300. The important work undertaken by this army of toilers, he said, included "the Office of the Third Sector and the Social Exclusion Taskforce". He stressed that "there will always be these things". But that surely might not be the case if the budget-scything Tories win power.

He said he was keen to examine the "socio-economic background" of recruits to the civil service and that he was an enthusiast for Whitehall's permanent secretaries (ie the Sir Humphreys) submitting to "360-degree reviews" of their management style.

Charles Walker (Con, Broxbourne) asked: "Do you ever sit down with the prime minister and say: 'Your management style perhaps needs a little bit of work?'"

Sir Gus: "Obviously I discuss with the prime minister the most efficient way of getting business done but I certainly do not do 360-degree reviews with him." Wise. He'd only have a Nokia thrown at his head.

Walker wondered if Sir Gus had given a 360-degree review to the Home Office's permanent secretary, Sir David Normington, who has dropped repeated bricks, among them the arrest of Tory MP Damian Green. Mr Walker asked: "Do you ever have a chat with him and say: 'David, you just need to calm down on occasions'? Do you give him advice?" Sir Gus, with just a hint of ice: "With every permanent secretary I have mid-year reviews where I talk to them about management style issues."

The Tories have declared their intention to rip £3bn out of Whitehall's costs. Labour MP Gordon Prentice (Pendle) wondered what Sir Gus thought of this idea. Sir Gus, without moving a muscle, said: "You are putting me in a very difficult position." He added that his private conversations with the Tories had been "very constructive". Does this mean he is confident he can baffle them with bullshit?

What, asked Mr Prentice, about disclosing the salaries of the top 35,000 civil servants. Sir Gus: "I would question whether it was cost-effective."

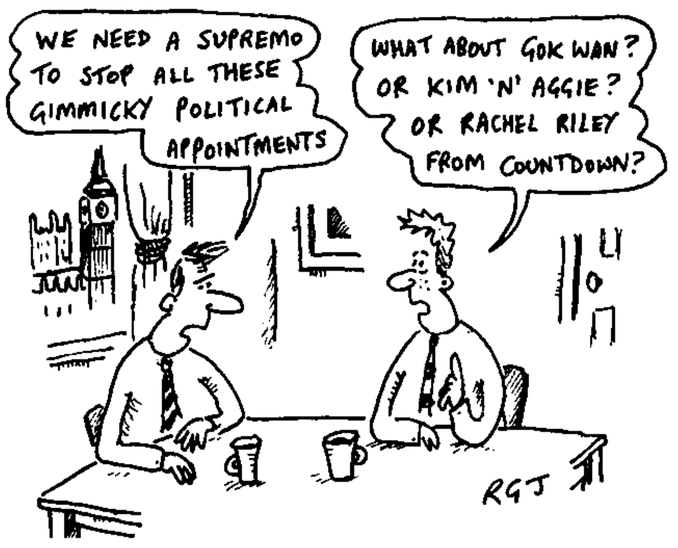
One recent suggestion often heard has been that top public servants should not be paid more than the prime minister. Sir Gus, who himself is paid about £100,000 more than Gordon Brown, found an ingenious solution to this. Why, it was obvious. The prime minister should be paid more!

'Gavel Basher'

NEWS that David Cameron was considering a peerage for TV's Kirstie Allsopp brought a dash of glamour to the grubby business of rebalancing the Lords towards the Tories.

The potential peerage for the TV property presenter was so exciting it appeared in every national newspaper. Oddly enough, the name of another woman who appears on telly a lot to talk about mortgages was also on the list of possible new peers – but her name received no press at all. She is Angela Knight, head of the British Bankers' Association (BBA); and existing Tory lords genuinely expect to see her joining them on the red benches as she is a former Tory MP.

It was handy for Cameron that Knight was overshadowed by the Kirstie factor. Giving political power to the bankers' representative is hardly a move designed for popularity – especially as Knight has been so firmly and loudly telling us all to "move on" and stop "publicly denigrating one of the best industries we've got".


WE NEED A SUPREMO TO STOP ALL THESE GIMMICKY POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS
WHAT ABOUT GOK WAN? OR KIM 'N' AGGIE? OR RACHEL RILEY FROM COUNTDOWN?
RGJ

ALTHOUGH Lord Eames' "peers-for-hire" report a fortnight ago called for an end to paid lobbying, it still enthusiastically endorsed the idea of noble members acting as legislators while profiting from jobs in related areas.

The report did recommend tightening up procedures for declaring interests, following the *Eye's* exposure of Labour peer Lord Warner's failure to mention his private healthcare interests in repeated debates on health reform (even though the Lords privileges committee cleared him by stretching the existing rules to breaking point). But, the report concluded, "it is not only permissible, but desirable, that such members, having declared their interests, should contribute to debate on issues to which these interests are relevant".

This will delight peers such as Baroness (Margaret) Jay and Lord (John) MacGregor. The former's paid interests include directorships at BT and Independent Newspapers; the latter's a job with Dutch bank Rabobank and the chairmanship of a couple of pension funds. And both happened to have been members of the six strong committee under Eames that produced the report. Strangely, though, a footnote to the report states "no relevant interests declared" for every member of the committee. So that's all right then.

NO DOUBT it would be wrong to deduce that civil servants at the Department of Business want nothing to do with the recently ennobled "enterprise tsar", Lord Sugar.

But put it like this: press inquiries about public servant Sugar are not handled by the normal Whitehall press officers. Any hack seeking information about "Tsar Alan" is referred to his private publicists, Frank PR. The sigh of relief from Whitehall when they say this is almost audible.

"I HAVE to say I'm mystified," wrote David Blunkett in a *Guardian* piece on Sir Christopher Kelly's expenses report on 5 November.

"To punish MPs because of the distance they live from London is perverse, but also dangerous to democracy. Those who spend time with their constituents, outside the Westminster bubble and the specific political and social pressures of London, bring an entirely different perspective and a breath of fresh air to our political system."

Under Kelly's rules, if a civil servant accompanied an MP back to his constituency, he pointed out: "The MP and the civil servant get into the first-class carriage, waving farewell to the MP's partner, who must travel in standard class (even though, with a bit of forward planning, a first-class ticket could have been purchased at a lower price than that of the standard-class ticket)."

A fact to remember about David Blunkett: he got round the train ticket problem in 2002 by giving a first-class rail warrant issued to him to his married lover Kimberly Quinn so taxpayers would pick up the £179 cost of her journey. The parliamentary commissioner for standards ruled that this was "a clear breach of the house rules and MPs' code of conduct".

WILL anyone investigate how a Scottish flag-waving event blew a £600,000 hole in the public accounts?

Former marketing man Lord Jamie Sempill, a Tory hereditary peer, persuaded Alex Salmond's SNP government in Holyrood to use taxpayers' money to guarantee the costs of "The Gathering" – a privately-run weekend of Highland Games and music aimed at luring Americans and others with "Scottish heritage" – as a flagship event in Salmond's Homecoming tourism programme.

The venture floundered financially, losing £600,000. The Scottish government will have to fork out around £300,000 to public sector bodies that are owed money, while the Edinburgh city council-funded Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance shoulders the debt to the private sector.

So far, so bad. But now it turns out that Lord Sempill, chief of Clan Sempill, vice-convenor of the Standing Council of Clan Chiefs and chairman of The Gathering, had "lent" some £38,000 of the £300,000 marketing budget provided by the Scottish government to the events company Panalba Ltd, whose directors include... Lord Sempill. MPs and MSPs want the whole business to be investigated by Audit Scotland.

COMMUNITIES

"A clear message needs to be sent to the pirate community: You don't hijack American-flagged ships on the high seas and take our citizens hostage." – *Baltimore Sun*

"A few months ago we announced our determination to reduce the amount we pay top on-air talent. The recommendations we have announced today seek to achieve similar reductions within our senior management community." – *Mark Thompson, BBC director-general*

"Europol develop working relationships with all law enforcement authorities competent for the fight against terrorism in the member states and, to some extent, has also developed contacts with the security/secret services community." – *EU memo*

"I note that the *Guardian* continues its attack on the animal protection community." – *Letter to Guardian*

NUMBER CRUNCHING

£10,000 Communications allowance to be abolished to ensure MPs do not waste public money

£100,000 Amount of public money head of new Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority will be paid

NEWS FROM THE 'STAN

WHILE belated efforts begin to identify "rogue" elements in the Afghan police who may be more loyal to a bung from the Taliban than to the British who are training them, news emerges of the extra scrutiny faced by our own troops when they return from duty in Afghanistan.

Soldiers from Scottish units returning to Edinburgh Airport reveal that after getting off the frequently delayed RAF flights home "they find themselves subjected to a level of scrutiny by the UK Borders Agency above that of an asylum seeker".

Despite still being in uniform and carrying an MOD90 identity card and a full British passport, it can take up to five hours to satisfy officials of their allegiance to the country they have just risked life and limb to serve.

One returning soldier who had already completed a tour in Afghanistan found himself at the back of a long line in front of a UKBA immigration officer who, when asked about passport requirements, was heard to remark: "Just the brown faced ones." The comment enraged troops serving alongside "brown faced" comrades who had faced identical threats, made identical sacrifices and won identical medals.

Complaints from troops deploying or returning to UK airports, including the main staging area at RAF Brize Norton, are legion. Flights are often delayed while ancient aircraft are repaired or replacement aircraft chartered and it can take more than three hours just to check in. Many of the problems arise when military flights are handled by civilian contractors who are more used to dealing with holidaymakers returning from Malaga rather than soldiers carrying kit and weapons. As one soldier from 3 Para puts it grimly: "The only way to avoid the hassle is to come home in a fucking box."

'Squarebasher'

ECO GNOMICS

Palmed off

FOOD giant Nestlé has finally decided to do something about palm oil.

After years of evasion and buck passing, it has accepted that it can play its part by requiring at least some basic environmental standards from the suppliers who are continuing to destroy primary forests across South East Asia.

On the eve of the annual meeting of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), the company issued a press release boasting: "Under its policy on environmental sustainability, Nestlé has pledged to give preference to suppliers who strive to improve the efficiency and sustainability of their operations and use of resources… Over the last few years, Nestlé has been closely associated with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)… Nestlé has now applied for full corporate membership of the RSPO, strengthening its efforts to find an effective multi-stakeholder solution to combat the environmental threat caused by the planting of palm oil plantations in South East Asia."

The claim that Nestlé has been "closely associated" with the RSPO caused as much laughter as despair among environmentalists. When several food companies, retailers, environmental groups and palm oil producers created the RSPO in 2001, Nestlé ignored it completely.

The company only woke up when campaign groups, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, started attacking brands containing palm oil like Dove soap and KitKat. Even then Nestlé tried to stall an industry-wide push for a moratorium on further deforestation for palm, derailing a major meeting of all UK palm buyers convened by Unilever and Greenpeace in London last year. Many in the room were aghast that a company that had refused to even join the RSPO had the nerve to undermine its tentative progress.

Since then the RSPO has become little more than a laughing stock. At its AGM in Kuala Lumpur last week it failed to introduce the higher standards that scientists believe are essential to protect ancient forests across Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea. There is evidence aplenty that even companies producing "sustainable" RSPO-certified palm oil are continuing to clear forests and burn peat, with a potentially devastating impact on climate change, not to mention habitat destruction. So, just as the RSPO's green-washing incompetence is affirmed for all to see, it can at last welcome Nestlé as an eager new member – a comic piece of timing only the wildlife and communities destroyed by eight years of talking rather than doing will fail to appreciate.

TVE

Festival of Remembrance (BBC1)

The X Factor (ITV1)

EVER since the creation of ITV in the 1950s, the rhetoric in television has been about the need to provide choice for viewers.

In fact, rather like the alternating Labour and Tory governments who have aimed to bring this variety to the screens, the competing networks have become ever more similar. Increasingly, they have offered the same kinds of programmes – ITV making costume dramas to look like BBC, the BBC coming up with talent shows to look like ITV – until this copycatting reached an apotheosis earlier this year with *Strictly Come Dancing* and ***The X Factor*** scheduled against each other.

But, with the Beeb having retreated from this head-to-head with bruised ratings, last Saturday night offered a rare example of what looked like a genuine contrast between channels: on the main BBC channel, **Festival of Remembrance**, the Royal British Legion's war memorial concert in the Royal Albert Hall, overlapped slightly with *The X Factor*, the programme featuring the only subject to compete for recent headline space with the British war dead in Afghanistan: the tuneless, witless pseudo-musical twin act now known as Jedward.

On the surface, this looked like the epitome of public service broadcasting versus the epitome of commercial television. The only thing the war memorial and the wannabe contest seemed to have in common was that Gordon Brown had made solemn statements about them on the same day: pro the war in Afghanistan, anti-Jedward.

However, anyone who watched one and recorded the other, or cut between the two, may have found them curiously similar. Both shows demonstrated the tendency of television to blur the lines of control in a programme, become captured by tabloid sentiment and to project a tone of smug self-importance. Oh, and each featured musical acts who can barely sing – military crooning trio The Soldiers on BBC1, Jedward on the other side – who struggle to hold a tune but can't be criticised because of the public sympathy vote.

Festival of Remembrance, for example, was a very odd fish.

There's a formula that's become popular with politicians

and commentators calling for a withdrawal from Afghanistan – total support for the troops, but questions about the mission they've been given – and many viewers must have felt the same about this transmission. Few could question the sentiment behind the event, but as for the execution of it…

As often when royalty is involved, the BBC seemed unsure whether it was hosting the event or reporting it: a confusion that led to official censure of the Live Earth concert a couple of years ago. At one level, the cameras were simply covering something organised by the Royal British Legion – a sort of *Songs of Praise* with poppies – but, blurringly, the concert was being hosted by Huw Edwards, one of its own news presenters, and therefore supposedly bound by rules of impartiality.

On this form, Huw looked rather partial to the idea of a knighthood or peerage on retirement. Doesn't it look a bit odd to have the host of the *BBC News at Ten* beginning an opening link with the words "Your Majesty, your Royal Highnesses, ladies and gentlemen"? Should a member of the BBC news division really be making speeches about what "we" all think about the British Army and its mission in Afghanistan?

And, though this was at heart one of the oldest and most conventional forms of television – a monachistic and patriotic event with Edwards doing the Richard Dimblebys – they couldn't keep themselves from trying to tart it up visually. Huw's opening link was shot modishly upwards from ground level, making him all tummy and chins, with the floodlit Royal Albert Hall rising over his shoulder.

Tubby, straight-faced and self-important, Huw reminded you of someone. Oh, yes, Simon Cowell, whose latest series of *The X Factor* is getting messier and sillier by the week. In this show, too, the editorial lines seem hopelessly blurred: Cowell is theoretically treated as just another panellist, when the suspicion must be that he's calling all the shots behind the scenes.

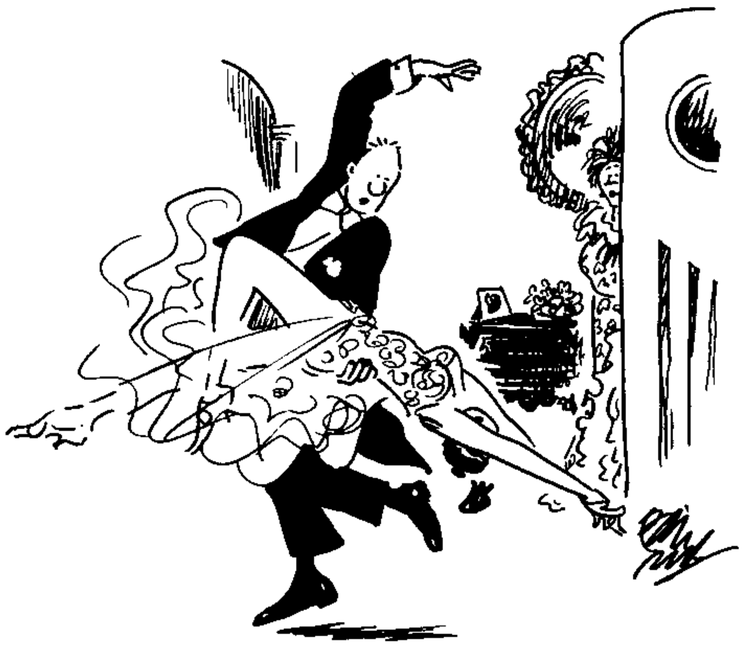
And the bitching between Cowell and Louis Walsh gets ever more shrill and petty. "I think Simon picked a really, really silly song," hissed Louis. "Simon, I think you're cheating again!" he complained a few rounds later. Cowell appeared to be letting it go but turned out to have been building up to a real hissy. After Walsh had suggested that "Simon and Gordon Brown have one thing in common – both know nothing about music", Cowell snapped: "Louis, you've insulted our Prime Minister tonight and you've insulted the public. I think you should apologise!"

At least Cowell had the consolation that Gordon Brown wasn't watching, because he was sitting live at the Royal Albert Hall while *The X Factor* went out. Those with a choice of viewing, though, were left with two examples of telly smugly bigging itself up while pretending to humbly reflect public taste.

'Remote Controller'

STRICTLY COME DANCING

The Problem of Bringing Work Home



LUVVIES

Would you go back to musical theatre?

I'd love to but you can't do that and TV at the same time, I'd end up doing both badly. I loved doing it. It was such a brilliant adventure and terrifying at the same time. To do a year and a half on stage at the London Palladium was a buzz that's hard to beat. The level of fear was incredible too, I'm worried if I do it as I get older it might kill me.

PHILLIP SCHOFIELD
Metro

Submitted by Francis Harvey.

AD NAUSEAM

FIRST Sony gave us coloured balls, then coloured paint, then coloured rabbits, and now it's coloured space hoppers.

Its new TV ad for the Sony Ericsson Satio mobile phone features a flash mob of beautiful people bouncing around Barcelona, part of a global branding campaign that is also running online and in print.

One of the print ads is particularly inspiring. A man is captured in mid-bounce holding on to his hopper with just one hand, looking almost orgasmic with joy as a woman takes his photo on her mobile. It appears as if the space hopper is an engorged scrotum and the man is holding on to his penis. "Do you perform your own stunts?" asks the copy? In the case of a couple of cheeky creatives at Sony Ericsson's agency Saatchi & Saatchi, the answer appears to be "yes".

ANOTHER year, another grandiose event ad from Guinness, practically the only company left on the planet yet to realise that these kinds of multi-million pound magna opera win their agency AMV BBDO awards, swell chests in adland, and do nothing for sales.

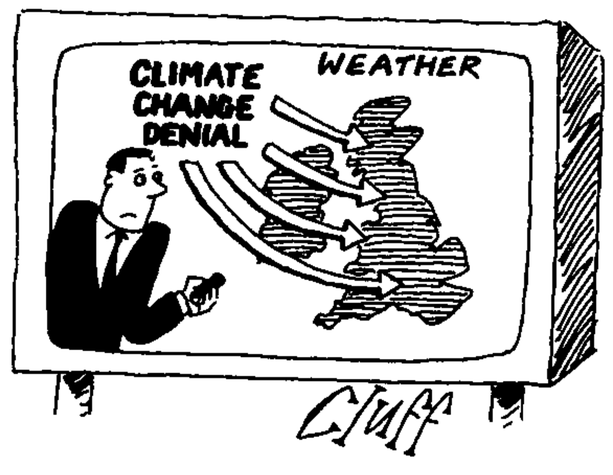
Good things no longer come to those who wait. "Bring it to life" is the new tagline for the ad, which is illustrated by the creation of an entire world – entire grasslands dragged into place, trees erected, whole gorges cleaved in to solid rock by hand – by men. The wizard idea is to increase off-sales by implying, with a metaphor extended like gum in hair, that a couple of tinnies of the black stuff will really get your party started, or "bring it to life".

Whether it will sell more stout remains to be seen. But on the back of Guinness's last showpiece, "noitulovE", which did indeed show "evolution" in reverse, it does raise the question of whether or not Guinness has some tacit agenda against creationists. Perhaps it should sponsor Richard Dawkins.

A LATE runner for 2009's most nauseating ad comes from Peugeot, which has done a Jools Oliver and used a semi-famous person's wife to try to shift product.

The unfortunate this time is Marina Fogle, wife of TV presenter Ben, who becomes the face of the Peugeot 3008 Crossover. "Just Another Multi-Tasking Day," runs the headline, above a scribbled timeline of the many balls poor Marina has to juggle of a Tuesday. These include: "7am Walk Dogs" (pictured, in case you don't know what a dog is); "10.30am Pick up Ben" (also pictured, in case you don't know who Marina is); "7pm Home! Feed Dogs" (pictured again, in case you wondered if the dogs were still alive having been left at home since 7am while Marina had lunch with a journalist and went to yoga); and "8.30pm Dinner with Ben" (see point 2).

Marina is pregnant, as the ad and the photos make abundantly clear. We wish the Fogles all the best with their new car.



MEDIA NEWS

ANOTHER stirring victory for Carter-Ruck who, fresh from their Trafigura triumph last month attempted to intervene on behalf of Max Clifford over his appearance in the film *Starsuckers*, a documentary about how easy it is to place fake celebrity stories in the tabloids.

Director Chris Atkins secretly filmed Clifford boasting about the stories he claims to have kept out of the papers on behalf of his clients, and the specific sum he is paid by Simon Cowell to do so – "a quarter of a million pounds for the last seven years, plus bonuses, per year", according to Clifford.

Having informed Clifford of their intention to use the footage in their film the day before its first press screening on 23 October, the producers were surprised to receive a letter from Carter-Fuck partner Magnus Boyd, pointing out that this information was commercially sensitive and that they would advise their client to apply for a court injunction unless it was removed from the film or disguised by bleeping ahead of any screening.

The deadline they set for a reply was precisely an hour and a half after 250 journalists sat down to watch *Starsuckers* in the Vue cinema in Leicester Square. The film – with Clifford's contribution intact – is in cinemas across the country this month (see Starsuckersmovie.com/screenings).

HOW to get the electorate interested in politics? Kelvin MacKenzie has the solution: a TV hustings show modelled on *The X-Factor*. "If I were the political leadership of this country I would go to Simon Cowell and ask him to come up with a format," he writes in his *Sun* column.

Kelvin seems to have forgotten that ITV devised just such a format five years ago for its series *Vote For Me*, which was described at the time as a political version of *Pop Idol*. And the judge in the Simon Cowell mode on that show was Kelvin MacKenzie.

Why the amnesia? One of the contestants in *Vote For Me* was a chap called Rodney Hylton-Potts, whose "cabbie's manifesto" – including the mandatory castration of paedophiles, the repeal of the human rights act, a massive prison-building scheme and an immigrant deportation programme to reduce Britain's population by 20m – put him to the right of the BNP. Even the *Sun* described him as a "swivel-eyed right-wing lunatic". To the huge embarrassment of Kelvin and ITV, Hylton-Potts won – thus ensuring that there would never be a second series.

GMTV no longer brings in so much cash from its lucrative premium-rate phone competitions since being fined £2m by Ofcom for vote-fixing. So the breakfast broadcaster is looking for new and cheaper ways to fill air-time.

Last Friday morning, presenters Andrew Castle and Penny Smith unveiled a "treat" for viewers – a minute-long trailer of Guy Ritchie's new Sherlock Holmes film.

Was there any accompanying editorial coverage – an interview with Ritchie, say, or with the stars of the movie or a film critic? Nope. GMTV simply broadcast the whole promo provided by the Hollywood studio.

Free advertising? Apparently so: it would, of course, be unthinkable that any money had changed hands.

***PR Week*'s "Taking The Drama Out Of A Crisis" conference promises a barrel of laughs and all for £600.**

Topping the bill, the BBC's Donald Steel will talk about the Beeb's brilliant handling of – yes! – "Sachsgate".

WHAT a tease Andrew Marr is. "I drink too much, but you've got to have some vices," he says in an interview with the *Observer* magazine's "Body and Soul" section.

Is he happy? "I worry about things, I get down, I get angry. I wouldn't say it's an entirely temperate life." Has he ever had therapy? "I'm lucky enough to have good friends and relatives. An unexamined life isn't worth living: we all examine, we all think, we all talk... that's the therapy that works best for me."

But as *Eye* readers know, Marr isn't always keen on talking. He has taken out an injunction to prevent news organisations from writing about certain aspects of his life – an injunction so severe that its very existence couldn't be reported until the *Eye* challenged it. So much for an unexamined life!

"I find that symbol of your faith offensive and want you sacked from your job"

"SKY HIGH TAXES" shrieked the *Sun* on 17 October in a deft bit of cross-promotion for its sister business, Sky, which it "exclusively" revealed would see commercial subscribers "clobbered with higher tax bills from next year" in a shake-up of business rates by local authorities.

"Sky Sports is a huge draw, with bars across the UK packed when big matches are on," reported an entirely unbiased David Wooding. "Valuation offices will consider this when working out how much a pub should pay... Pubs are closing at the rate of 52 a week, with 13,500 jobs lost in the trade this year."

Another body which calculates its bills in the same way is, er, Sky, which bases subscriptions for pubs on their rateable value. While subscribing to Sky Sports costs £35.50 per month for domestic customers, most pubs have to pay well over a grand a month.

"If Sky want to help the pub trade and grow their respective businesses they need to look at their current pricing structure," grumbled Mark Daniels, a landlord and columnist in trade paper *The Publican,* last month. "Many of us would love to put Sky in, but the cost is either a) too prohibitive or b) the service is an unknown quantity: would it really bring in enough extra punters? Committing to a service for a minimum of 12 months at full price is too much for a lot of us."

Sky's increase in revenue in the three months to the end of September? Up 10 percent to a recession-busting £1.38bn. Trebles all round!

"NOW that the presenter to whom colleagues believed Douglas's commitment was 'almost obsessive' is gone, will his fellow John Noel clients have the same appeal to her successor?" asked the *Eye* after the resignations from the BBC of both Russell Brand and controller of Radios 2 and 6music, Lesley Douglas, a year ago.

The answer came last week when controller Bob Shennan put a decisive end to the dominance that celebrity agent John Noel had long had over the digital station's roster by announcing that Brand wannabe George Lamb had been shifted from his weekday morning show to the 7am shift at weekends.

Lamb will be replaced by non-Noel client Lauren Laverne, the former singer with Kenickie, who will hand over at 1pm to former Catatonia frontwoman Cerys Matthews, one of a number of musicians recruited or promoted by Shennan. Matthews was given what was described as a "permanent" gig on the station in June, when Noel-represented Nemone departed on maternity leave in June.

DJ duo the Queens of Noize have also lost their weekly show, meaning that in the space of a year the number of hours of 6music output fronted by Noel clients has dropped from 47 to 15.

***INDEPENDENT* editor Roger Alton turned the air blue just before 7.30pm on 23 October as he scoured the office for the paper's economics editor, Sean O'Grady.**

"Where's Sean? Get me f***ing Sean!" he yelled into the phone. If only Rog had glanced at the newsroom TV screen behind him, where Sky News was interviewing... Sean O'Grady!

DUMB BRITAIN

Are You Smarter Than a Ten-Year Old?, Sky One

Dick (or maybe Dom): How many sons did Noah have: three, five or eight?

Contestant: Oh my God, I have no idea. I thought Noah had the Ark. I didn't know he had sons.

Dom (or maybe Dick): Epeius was a master carpenter. What did he famously build for the ancient Greeks?

Contestant: Erm, wasn't it that thing? It's like a building, with like, things? Pillars?

Dick: We might be needing more of an answer than that.

Contestant (rambles): A thing with pillars... The house of the gods...

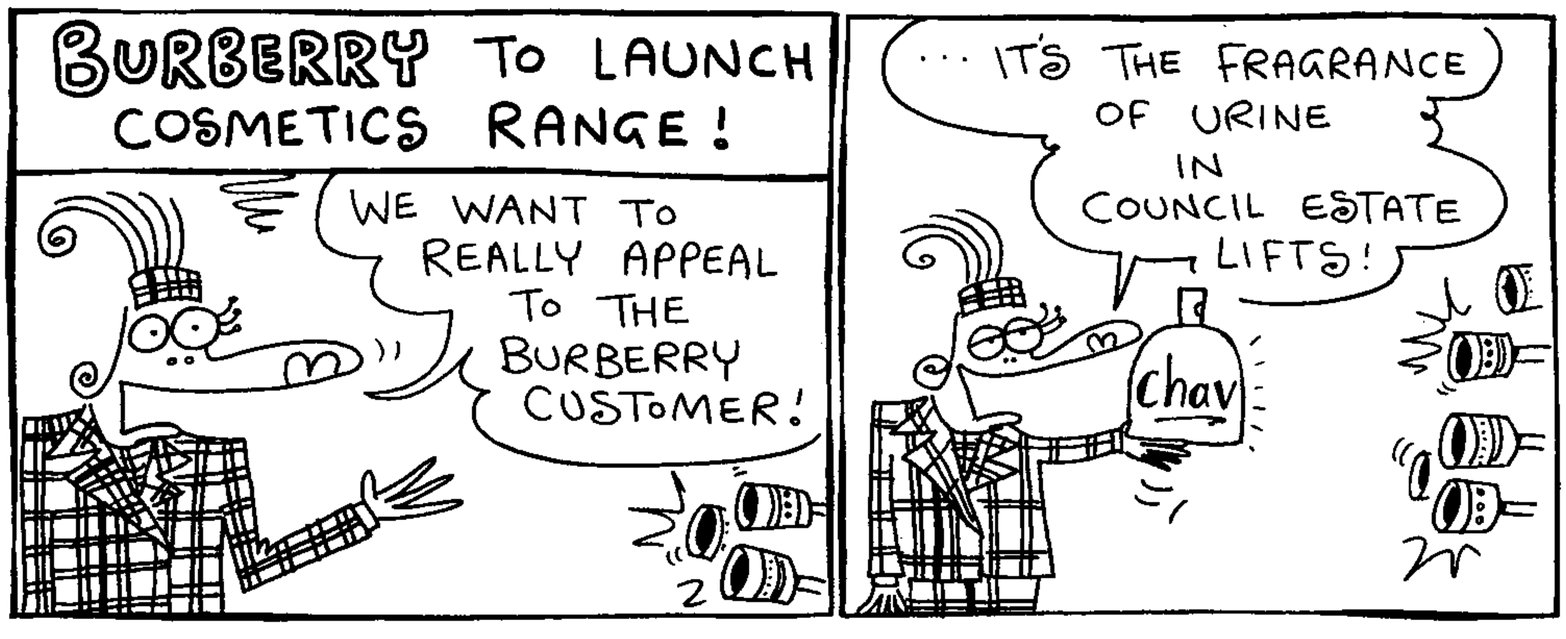
The Weakest Link, BBC1

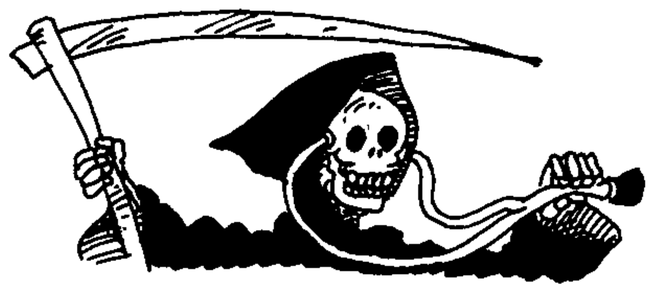
Anne Robinson: What is the Latin name of the province in Canada that means "New Scotland" in English?

Contestant: Johannesburg.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


BURBERRY TO LAUNCH COSMETICS RANGE!
WE WANT TO REALLY APPEAL TO THE BURBERRY CUSTOMER!
... IT'S THE FRAGRANCE OF URINE IN COUNCIL ESTATE LIFTS!
Chav



MEDICINE BALLS

Breathtaking waste

A KENT GP has contacted the *Eye* to expose an oxygen scam.

"Two and a half years ago, oxygen stopped being available from pharmacies, and can now only be accessed from companies such as BOC and Air Liquide through a dreaded pernickety HOOF form where every last detail has to be correct to enable a patient to get a supply.

"The contract was negotiated centrally with a sliding scale of daily payments depending on type of supply. What was never agreed was a sensible way of monitoring this. It seems that the companies only had to supply to PCTs' alphabetical lists of patients that they thought they were supplying oxygen to. This is not broken down to practices or even postcodes and – given that most supplies are initiated in secondary care – it's impossible for practices to know which of their patients are on oxygen, and what type of supply is being provided.

"I and some clinical colleagues have been trying to set up a respiratory service for several years, funded by saving from rationalising oxygen provision. This is a no-brainer. We have done research showing that we have been paying up to £750,000 a year for oxygen supplies to patients who don't need it, or are on the wrong type of supply, are dead or have moved or come from elsewhere. I have pleaded with my PCT for a couple of years to just supply each practice with a list of patients on oxygen so they can feed back who is alive or dead as a minimum. Forces of incompetence or conspiracy are about to prevent this happening and saving a massive amount of money."

Another GP adds that for many PCTs, the "three-day emergency treatment request" for oxygen often isn't altered after three days so they continue to pay the emergency rate, unless they remember to do a second request for a routine supply. The PCT is also charged for a new supply of oxygen whenever patients move house (even if it is only round the corner), and is often charged for oxygen at the old address too. An audit of his deceased patients found that many dead patients appeared still to be on oxygen, although there was no easy way of checking whether the PCT was being charged for it.

Bristol Pathology update

THE review into alleged pathology misdiagnoses at University Hospitals Bristol (UHB) triggered by *Private Eye* couldn't have come at a worse time for those trying to centralise Bristol and Bath's gynaecology cancer surgery at UHB.

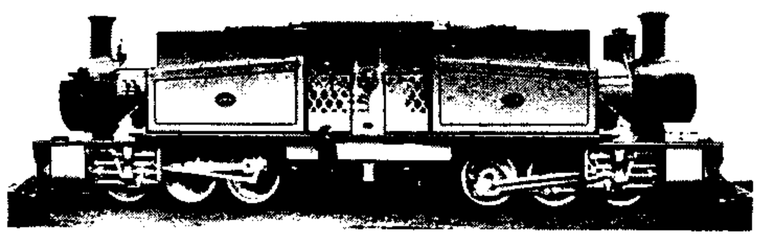
High quality specialist pathology services are crucial both for accurate diagnosis and guidance in selecting complex treatment, but NHS Bath & North East Somerset (BaNES) and the Avon, Somerset and Wiltshire Cancer Services Network (ASWCS) were either blissfully unaware of, or chose to ignore, well known allegations about serious errors at UHB, put in writing in 2007 and 2008.

Prior to the *Eye*'s exposure of alleged misdiagnosis affecting not just gynaecology but also dermatology, breast, respiratory and paediatric pathology, NHS BaNES and the ASWCS had declined to order an external review, accepting UHB's assurance that quality control in pathology was "appropriate". Should the review team determine otherwise, a lot of senior NHS commissioners will have to cover their arses.

The review itself is looking at 3,500 slides chosen at random in the year 2007, for reasons that are not statistically clear. Nor does there appear to be any agreed standard as to what constitutes an "acceptable error rate". A further 26 cases, presumably including the detailed allegations sent to the *Eye*, will also be looked at, if "missing" slides can be recovered and clinicians who had concerns are brave enough to come forward. The inquiry team has stated its independence and is keen to hear from anyone who has or had concerns about UHB's pathology. Contact Peter.Harrowing@UHBristol.nhs.uk or 0117 3423730. And let the *Eye* know if you're not invited to give evidence.

M.D.

SIGNAL FAILURES



Blackmail blues

COMPETITION was supposed to be the bedrock of rail privatisation, but rivalry on the tracks proved impractical or damaging. So it is only the competition for new franchises that keeps train firms on their toes, and now they are even campaigning to dilute that.

The Association of Train Operating Companies (Atoc) argued last month that franchises of 15 or 20 years (instead of 7 to 10 years) would focus managers on improving services rather than their next franchise bids, facilitate private investment by giving firms longer to benefit, and give the firms a greater stake in the railways.

"Longer franchises are already used successfully in Britain," said Atoc, highlighting the long franchises of top-performers c2c, Chiltern and Merseyrail. But the overall record shows long franchises are no better or worse than short ones: the problems of short-termism and greed (*Eye* 1247) in an industry of long timescales won't be eradicated unless private rail franchises are abolished.

Atoc didn't mention that Virgin's failed west-coast franchise lasts 15 years and Connex South Eastern and Virgin CrossCountry (15 years each) were so dire they were scrapped early. Chiltern, c2c and Merseyrail *should* be top performers because their routes are small and simple.

Atoc argues that firms would invest in new trains if they had longer franchises, but Virgin's long contract *delays* new Pendolino carriages. The 106 carriages won't all enter service until after the franchise expires in 2012, thanks to contractual wrangling between the transport department and Virgin (*Eyes* 1202 and 1207) when rail minister Tom Harris fumed: "I wasn't prepared for the department to be blackmailed."

Arriva Trains Wales has 60 of Britain's crappiest carriages but won't provide any new trains by the time its 15-year franchise ends in 2018 – another fact Atoc conveniently omitted.

The government of course can't predict the future when letting a franchise, and longer franchises make the need for contract amendments – through exclusive deals with the ensconced franchisee – much more likely. For example, London franchise deals didn't anticipate the growth of Oyster smartcards, which make travel easier – to transport firms' benefit. As Oyster wasn't in their contracts, rail franchisees refused to install the equipment in 2006 without extra cash (*Eye* 1161). Taxpayers had to stump up £40m but Oyster pay-as-you-go still isn't universal on franchised London trains.

It's natural that Atoc's profit-hungry members want more of this. What's bizarre is that all three main parties are going into a general election promising to squander billions more on rail franchising and its supporting bureaucracy. The Tories want 15-year franchises and the Liberal Dimwits want 30-year franchises – laying six or seven future governments open to potential "blackmail" by entrenched franchisees.

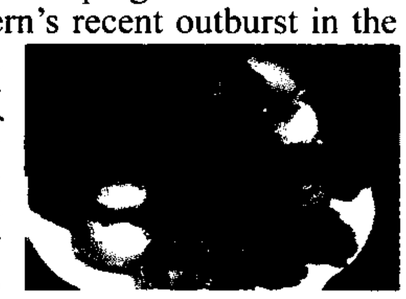
'Dr B Ching'

The Agri Brigade

LORD STERN, author of the 2006 "Stern Review" on climate change, predicts that meat eating will one day become as taboo as drink-driving. But at the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) he is already preaching to the converted.

Secretary of state Hilary Benn and his recently appointed farms minister Jim Fitzpatrick, the government's two leading vegetarians, were already setting about the eradication of UK livestock farming with missionary zeal even before the noble lord lent them a helping hand.

Not surprisingly Stern's recent outburst in the *Times* that "meat is a wasteful use of water and creates a lot of greenhouse gases" and that "a vegetarian diet is better" has rather upset the organisations that represent Britain's 80,000 surviving livestock farmers. In a show of unity the English Beef and Lamb Executive, Meat Promotion Wales, the National Sheep Association, Quality Meat Scotland and the National Farmers Union issued a joint press release pointing out that methane emissions from agriculture have fallen by 17 percent since 1990 and that the industry's CO_2 emissions now account for less than 1 percent of the UK's total.



Although Benn and Fitzpatrick parrot the line that they're wedded to the concept of a British agriculture that will "produce as much as possible", the underlying trends in UK meat production tell a different story. In just eight years UK beef cow numbers have dropped 7 percent, breeding ewes 24 percent and breeding sows 32 percent, with every sign that the rate of decline is set to continue or even accelerate.

As meat imports into the UK have begun to surge, Mark Adams, president of the British Meat Processors Association, says: "There is concern about dwindling availability of British stock among those who have got big investments in British abattoirs because it will be difficult to maintain profitability with less going through them."

The causes of declining UK livestock numbers are numerous but can mostly be traced to Defra: its mishandling of the foot and mouth and bovine TB epidemics; its insistence that producers should in future pay the cost of clearing up these disease outbreaks even though much of the cost is a result of Defra's own mismanagement; its demand that farmers wishing to enter wetland conservation schemes must first agree to graze so few animals on their land that many producers claim their farms would be rendered uneconomic.

Add to this the tying up in knots of farmers with miles of additional red tape, and threats of fines for "non compliance" on the back of the 2005 CAP reform, and it all adds up to an acid concoction that has eaten away at the will of producers to carry on.

Benn, meanwhile, continues to tell farmers they "need to play their part in strong domestic production". But livestock farmers have learnt to their cost that although his hollow encouragement and patronising platitudes may not contain greenhouses gases they are, nonetheless, so much hot air.

'New Bio-waste Spreader'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

£300,000 SECRET

WHAT passed between former Haringey council leader Charles Adje and a female council officer that was deemed so embarrassing the council spent more than £300,000 covering it up?

The employee, who made complaints against Cllr Adje and another senior Labour councillor, was put on "gardening leave" for a year before leaving the council last year with a £300,000 payoff, on condition that she dropped a threatened employment tribunal case and signed a gagging clause.

When Lib Dem councillor John Oakes got hold of a copy of a "confidential" report on the matter prepared for the council's general purposes committee in November 2008, he was astonished at the size of the payoff. Believing such matters should not be swept under the carpet, he tried to email the report to Fleet Street hacks, but his emails were intercepted by the council's IT snoopers. Deputy leader Lorna Reith then insisted Oakes be hauled before the council's standards committee for "undermining the interests of the council".

After a 10-month "investigation" that spawned its own 297-page report, Oakes has now been suspended for two months. In his evidence to the committee he said: "In view of the large amounts of money which have been expended on this case, because of Haringey's then habit of giving people extended gardening leave and failure to determine their situations properly, I decided there was an overriding public interest with this situation."

How naive. Doesn't he know that in Haringey the culture of secrecy trumps the public interest every time?

● ALTHOUGH a payoff of £65,000 is modest compared to the £300,000 Haringey spent buying the silence of Ms X, it still equates to a good two month's work – or rather not work – for Stoke-on-Trent's former assistant chief executive Chris Harman.

He had been acting chief executive for the past year while the council sought a replacement for its previous chief exec, Steve Robinson. Harman applied for the £195,000-a-year top job, but didn't get it. When the appointment of John van de Laarschot, currently running Torridge district council in Devon, was announced at the end of September, Harman flounced out and went on "sick leave". He continued to receive his £157,000 salary, despite leaving the council in the lurch as Mr Van de Laarschot cannot start full-time until January. Instead of firing Harman – who could have carried on in his old job – spineless councillors rewarded him for his petulance with 65 grand. Treble hissy fits all round!

MERRICK GO-ROUND

KENSINGTON & Chelsea council leader Merrick Cockell is proving adept at bumping up his income by having multiple part-time jobs.

London's best paid borough leader (£66,478), who gets another £21,492 to chair the useless London Councils umbrella group, is now collecting a further £14,000 a year as a member of, er, the Audit Commission. That's nearly £102,000 from the taxpayer, not counting expenses. He's also a member of the board of the Tory party.

Cockell has come under fire recently over his exes and his use of K&C's ceremonial mayoral Bentley. In February he told the local press: "These cars [the Bentley and a Jag] are for the use of the mayor and deputy mayor... About six times a year the mayor kindly gives me a lift." This was somewhat economical with the actualité. Research by Taxpayers Alliance activist Donald Cameron reveals 11 solo rides in the limo, including a return trip to Heathrow, where Cockell was catching a flight to New York to attend a conference in his role as chair of London Councils. This was not K&C council business, yet he still put the trip, including first-class flights, luxury hotel accommodation, more limos and "entertaining", on his K&C exes. This included a $185 (£115) meal for two at the Four Seasons restaurant, courtesy of the generous folk of Kensington. Cockell has not revealed who his guest was.

The prospective Lib Dem parliamentary candidate for Kensington, Robin Meltzer, has calculated that Cockell claimed £13,407.33 in expenses last year, of which only £3,217 was declared on the council's website. Cockell has previously been cleared by internal council reviews. Meltzer has sent a dossier to district auditor Kash Pandya, who he hopes will be more rigorous.

MYSTERY SHOPPED

MANY residents in Tower Hamlets are baffled at their council's four-star rating from the Audit Commission, which, on paper at least, makes the London borough one of the best-performing local authorities in Britain. How do they do it?

One clue emerged last week when the *Eye* received an internal email sent to Tower Hamlets staff. "From Wednesday 11 November to Friday 20 November, the Care Quality Commission... will undertake an inspection of Tower Hamlets Council's delivery of adult social care services... During this period, the inspectors will be meeting with people who use care services, their carers and frontline staff. They will also be 'mystery shopping' for social care information across a variety of council locations throughout the borough..."

The email then provided two links so staff could "see what the inspectors look like", with photos of the three undercover sleuths – Laurie James, Jacqueline Corbett and Melvyn Sequeria – who would be checking them out. After all, if you're going to be inspected by "mystery shoppers" it's best to take the mystery out of it first, innit?

"Are you sure your parents live in the catchment area?"

● PLANNING officers at Tower Hamlets, meanwhile, have cancelled a regular minibus laid on to take councillors on site visits – regarded as an essential part of the planning process at most councils – because so few of the lazy-arses ever bother to turn up.

One honourable exception is opposition Tory Tim Archer, who tells the *Eye*: "Some boroughs don't allow members to sit on a planning application unless they have been on the site visit." But, as in so many things, they have their own way of doing things in Tower Hamlets.

BANANA REPUBLIC

WITH only months to go to the general election and local Lib Dem MP Paul Rowen more than a little embarrassed by the expenses scandal (£1m in public funds received since 2005, including 40p for a banana), one might have expected the Labour party in Rochdale to be united behind its parliamentary candidate, Simon Danczuk.

Alas, no. This is the Labour party and this is Rochdale, so the comrades are tearing themselves apart instead. Persons unknown opposed to "outsider" Danczuk's selection in 2007 sent sick funereal floral tributes to his home and made an anonymous call threatening that his "body parts would be strewn across the M6" unless he stepped down (*Eye* 1177). Knacker investigated but the culprits weren't found.

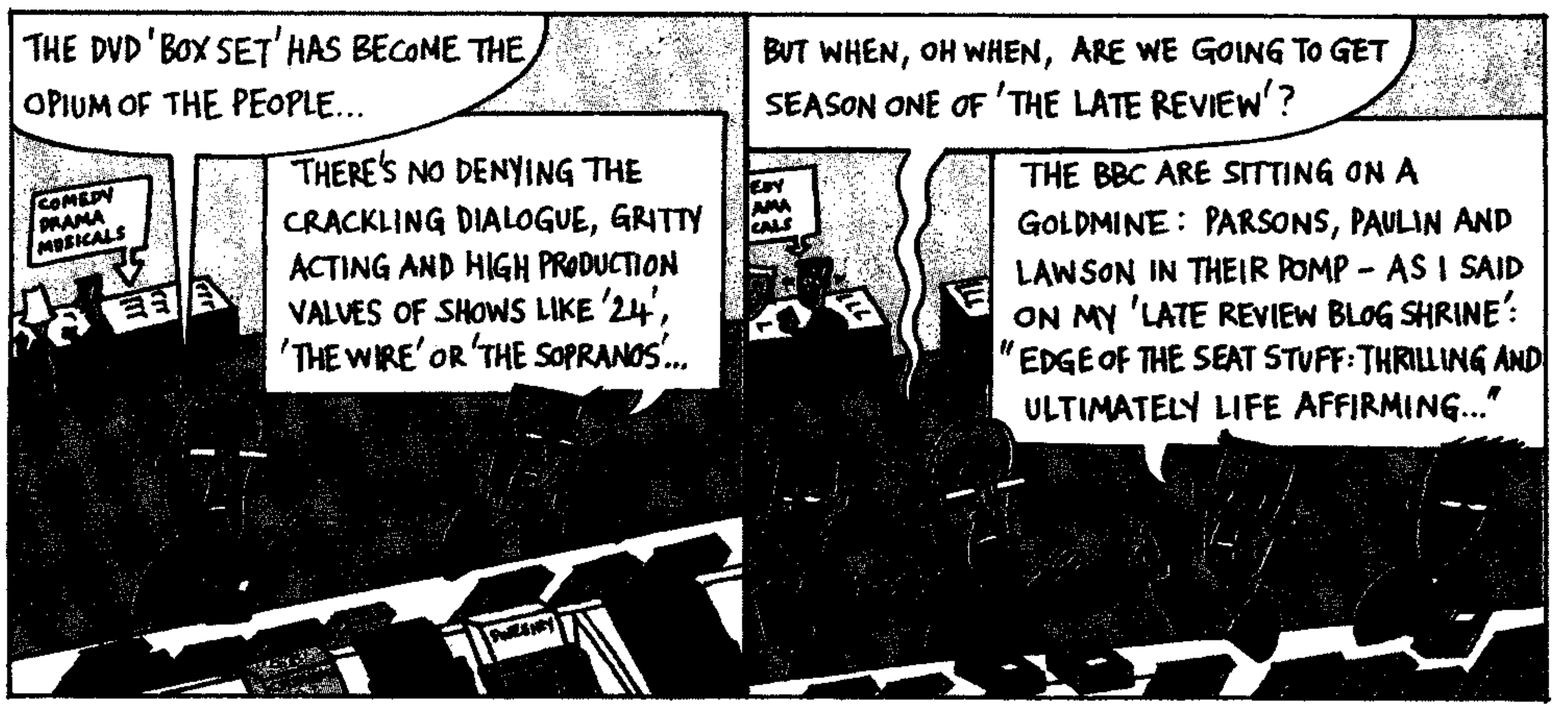
In recent months some of Danczuk's opponents have spread unfounded allegations that he is a partner-beater, over which he is taking legal action. The smears were seized on by five long-standing opponents of Danczuk in the local Labour party who, following a party investigation, have been expelled. Several others have since resigned "on principle", including a senior Rochdale councillor, Robin Parker.

In 2005 *Eye* 1134 reported how Cllr Parker, to avoid Labour's then one-seat majority on the council being put at risk, had covered up the fact that Labour Cllr Gholam Murtaza had previously served a six-month jail sentence for assaulting two female detectives with a kitchen knife – and should therefore have been ineligible to stand as a candidate. Clearly a man well qualified to pontificate about principles.

● DONCASTER has had well-documented problems safeguarding its children. So perhaps the council would have done well to employ a proof-reader before issuing its latest advice to potential foster parents.

The council's fostering eligibility fact sheet reassures potential carers that "we approve carers regardless of their working or financial status, as long as you are unable to provide a secure home".

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON KNIFE & PACKER


THE DVD 'BOX SET' HAS BECOME THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE...
COMEDY DRAMA MUSICALS
THERE'S NO DENYING THE CRACKLING DIALOGUE, GRITTY ACTING AND HIGH PRODUCTION VALUES OF SHOWS LIKE '24', 'THE WIRE' OR 'THE SOPRANOS'...
BUT WHEN, OH WHEN, ARE WE GOING TO GET SEASON ONE OF 'THE LATE REVIEW'?
EDY AMA CALS
THE BBC ARE SITTING ON A GOLDMINE: PARSONS, PAULIN AND LAWSON IN THEIR POMP – AS I SAID ON MY 'LATE REVIEW BLOG SHRINE': "EDGE OF THE SEAT STUFF: THRILLING AND ULTIMATELY LIFE AFFIRMING..."

NOOKS and CORNERS

STATUES may proliferate (of lower and lower artistic merit) but the truth is there are few national heroes who are truly admirable. One who surely deserves reverence, however, is Air Chief Marshall Sir Hugh Dowding who quite literally saved this country.

As leader of the newly created Fighter Command in the 1930s, Dowding built up Britain's air defences and his strategy enabled the Royal Air Force to win the Battle of Britain against the odds. Without Dowding, Britain's air force could have been destroyed and a Nazi invasion would have followed. Yet, notoriously, owing to petty politics and jealousies, following victory in 1940 Dowding was summarily retired and his achievement not acknowledged. Some recompense was made in 1988 when a feeble statue was erected in front of St Clement Danes (a compliment undermined when he was joined a few years later by one of "Bomber" Harris). And in 2000 English Heritage placed a blue plaque on the house in Wimbledon where Dowding lived for a decade after 1941.

3 St Mary's Road was a neo-Tudor suburban house built in 1924. Thanks in part to the Dowding connection, it was one of five houses which contributed to making this part of Wimbledon Hill a conservation area. Despite this, the owner of No 3 applied for planning permission to demolish his house and replace it with something bigger. The London borough of Merton initially insisted that the front façade of the house – with its built-in blue plaque – be re-erected. However, having demolished the house, the anti-social owner then applied for permission to build an entirely new dwelling designed by the Park Practice. And, shamefully, Merton council – without consulting English Heritage and ignoring the fact that Dowding's former house had once been deemed to be the positive contribution to the conservation area – obliged. A decent house will now be replaced with something inferior and Dowding's tangible connection with Wimbledon has been expunged as, quite rightly, blue plaques are only erected on authentic buildings with a genuine connection with famous people.

The presence of a blue plaque is not, of course, a preservation order; but one might have thought Merton council would have been anxious to protect a building associated with a national hero and a truly great man – especially as the council had proposed the plaque in the first place. It is not as if Wimbledon is over-endowed with interesting buildings or blue plaques.

MY photograph shows St Wilfrid's, Harrogate, seen from the south-east, a magnificent church designed in 1903 by Temple Lushington Moore and completed by his son-in-law Leslie Moore.

John Betjeman, sainted founder of this column, considered Temple Moore to be one of the greatest of Victorian and Edwardian church architects and St Wilfrid's Harrogate one of his finest works. As the church's own website proudly announces, it is the only grade I listed building in the Yorkshire spa town and it stands in a conservation area known as the Duchy Estate.

Naturally St Wilfrid's, like most churches, needs money, so a deal has been done with the electricity company NEDL to build an electricity primary station in the grounds to the rear, that is, to the south-east of the church. At present this is open space much used by local children and for car parking for the congregation. The proposed electricity station will not be a small gently humming box: it will be 30m long, 8m wide and 8m high, and will stand close to the church and 5m from the church cottage. Trees will have to be felled to accommodate it. Despite concerns about the dangers to health from the electromagnetic radiation emanating from such facilities and that very occasionally they explode, the planning officer responsible was at first not going to bother to submit the application to Harrogate council's planning committee.

Local residents are outraged and Harrogate Civic Society is objecting to this gratuitous threat to the setting of a grade I listed building. The planning application cheerfully states that at a "Church and community meeting… unanimous approval" was given. In fact no such meeting took place and the local Duchy residents

have not been formally consulted. The deal with NEDL was done by the Rector of St Wilfrid's, the Rev Mark Sowerby, and his parish church council, who did their best to keep the congregation in the dark. Now many members of the congregation are upset, but the rector won't have to answer any awkward questions. The planning application was submitted in June and in July Mr Sowerby was suddenly made Bishop of Horsham. How convenient that he was gone in a month!

UNDER the government's proposals to speed up the planning system, proposals like that to spoil St Wilfrid's Harrogate will go through on the nod.

The unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission will be able to ignore local authorities and other legal constraints to push forward "major infrastructure projects" like new roads, power lines, etc, while the draft changes to historic building protection – PPS 15: quietly released over the summer when no one was looking – encourages local authorities to allow the demolition or mutilation of listed buildings when there are overriding social or economic benefits. We have been warned.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

Outrageous that the bankers are getting huge bonuses again...
Thanks to the taxpayer!
Shameful!
BACK TO THE BAD OLD DAYS!
BANKS WON'T BE TOLD.
RAMPANT GREED
RETURNS TO THE CITY.
And can spend lots of money on our art...
They deserve it.
Marvellous!
BACK TO THE

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

IT'S probably been the best present the Master of the Queen's Music, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, has had in his 75th birthday year. After endlessly drawn-out legal proceedings that began in 2007, his former manager Michael Arnold has at last been jailed for a massive fraud that drained Davies of his income over 30 years and left him shell-shocked when it came to light.

The two men had been close friends and, along with Arnold's wife, they functioned like a family. That Arnold had the whole time been defrauding him was a betrayal hard to countenance. But there are details of this case that haven't featured in reports and indicate the easy prey that innocent musicians make for fraudsters.

As an other-worldly chap who on his own admission doesn't "do" money and had no idea how much he was or wasn't earning, Davies apparently let years pass without questioning the persistent emptiness of his bank account – and when he did, he was quite satisfied with Arnold's bland response that the cashpoint must have been faulty.

Worse still, being of perfectly sound mind and body, he nonetheless gave Arnold power of attorney over his affairs – something you'd normally only do *in extremis* – and then failed to notice that the charming Mr Arnold had taken the opportunity to mortgage his home. In fact it wasn't until the Royal Household started making inquiries, in the interests of the small salary it pays Sir Peter as Master of the Queen's Music, that the truth emerged.

As his partner, an amiable ex-builder by the name of Colin, commented privately: "All these years we've been travelling Easyjet, standing in queues, waiting for the bus... We could've been around the world first class on British Airways."

Elsewhere in the world of musical innocents, meanwhile, there's another set of criminal proceedings pending against a businessman who has allegedly – and again, over some years – been defrauding King's Music, a specialist publishing house known for its editions of baroque scores and run by noted scholar Clifford Bartlett.

Thanks to the alleged fraud, KM has gone bust; and although big names of period performance like Roger Norrington and Emma Kirkby have rushed to offer support, the future for Bartlett and his enterprises (which include the magazine *Early Music Review*) doesn't look good. That the catastrophe developed out of something so mundane as lease-agreements for photocopiers also makes it look sad.

AS if the major record labels didn't have enough trouble persuading punters to buy their discs, they're also facing desertion by artists fed up with the demeaning measures being taken to broaden their appeal.

The latest defector is the "people's tenor" Alfie Boe, who's spent the past three years being packaged by EMI as its hot young hope for crossover stardom but who now reveals that this was never what he wanted and has walked out on the deal, signing instead with the small independent label Linn Records to make what he calls "credible" classical discs.

First indications of this move came several weeks ago in an interview with the *Ham & High* that talked about wanting to go straight, avoid the Russell Watson route, and not have to sing Abba songs. Well, now he won't. But he will have to think hard about cleaning up his act in other respects too. Down at Welsh National Opera, where he's been starring in David McVicar's production of *Traviata*, he was spicing up the show with glimpses of his naked, singing-heart-throb bottom – until company management stepped in and asked him, please, to keep it covered. It was causing too much of a stir in the stalls.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Letters

Cover story

Sir,

Thanks very much for your latest free gift. As you can see from the attached picture it came in very handy at a Halloween party last Saturday night. The mask is now safely ensconced in my dressing up box and will no doubt be much used over the coming years.

MARK BYRNE,

Littleton Panell, Wilts.

Brand loyalty

Sir,

It was not as odd as it may have first appeared for the Sun to seek Russell Brand's opinions on the BNP (Street of Shame, Eye 1248).

In his 2002 show RE:Brand, he famously confronted Mark Collett, then chairman of Young BNP and now the BNP's director of publicity, questioning him at length on his racist and homophobic views.

Whatever you may think of Brand, it was an example of 'youth' broadcasting at its best.

MARK HOOPER,

London.

Smoke alarm

Sir,

Your section on Waste Incineration (Issue 1248, p30) is helpfully illustrated by a picture of a chimney belching thick smoke. Since the incinerators discussed in the article appear not to have been built yet, what does the picture actually illustrate? Not Lord Gnome's prejudices, surely?

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE TEDBURY,

Calne.

PS: I found the latest crossword surprisingly easy.

Cross words

Sir,

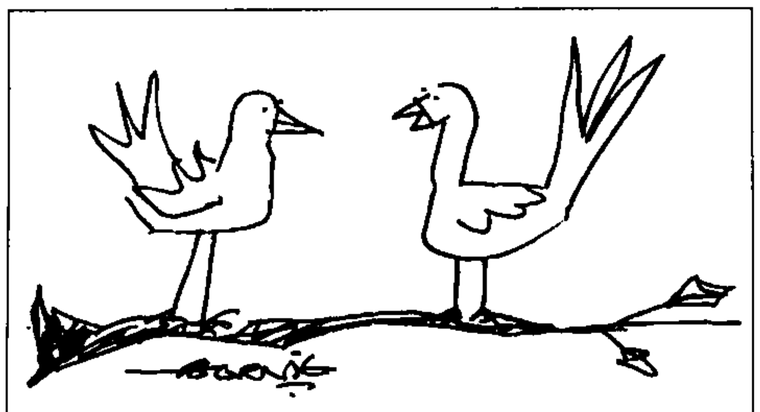
ACROSS: 1) Just 4) Because 7) You've Embarrassingly 8) Reprinted 13) The Same 16) Crossword 18) From A Few 21) Weeks Ago 22) Doesn't Mean That

DOWN: 2) I Can 3) Get 4) The Bloody 6) Answers 11) Right But 13) As You Must 14) Have Saved 17) A Hundred Quid 19) Can You Send 23) Me A Cheque 24) Ta

JOHN WRAY,

Via email.

● Apologies for the non-appearance of Crossword 403 in issue 1248. Congratulations to those who found it anyway at www.private-eye.co.uk



"Singing is all I've ever really wanted to do"

Burke and berk

Sir,

Your correspondent Andrew Martin (Letters, Eye 1248) knows less than he thinks. As an elected Fellow of the Energy Institute I have no choice but to own up to being a formally recognised energy policy expert. I do my best to disguise this by injecting common sense into the energy debate whenever possible. Since common sense is as dangerous as kryptonite to the case for more nuclear reactors I can fully understand, if not forgive, the desire of EDF to keep me away from the public.

Yours etc.,
TOM BURKE, FEI,

Via email.

Sci Fie!

Sir,

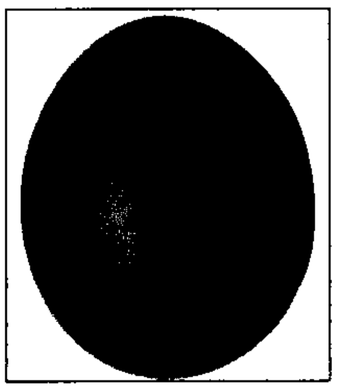
Somebody really ought to point out to Margaret Atwood that many science fiction fans and authors don't like or use the term "Sci Fi" (pronounced "Sky Fie" or "Skiffy") any more than she does (Literary Review, Eye 1247). It is seen by them as being about screams and bangs resounding in outer space, ten-foot-tall faster-than-light-travelling spiders, giant octopodes and such-like nonsense.

Quite a few people decided some time ago that their preferred name for the genre, "SF", stood not for "science fiction" but for "speculative fiction": Robert A. Heinlein proposed the term in print in 1947, Judith Merrill gave it further definition in 1966, Gene Wolfe carried on that good work in 1986, and so on. It may not be older than MA is, but it has certainly been around and in use since she was eight. It's possible she knows this, but judging by her books she scorns to look at what others before her may have done with the SF ideas she uses, so it might be an idea for her be told it.

CHRIS GHOTI,

Via email.

Lookalike



Chef

Ingredient

Sir,

Has anyone else noticed that Masterchef host Greg Wallace is actually an ingredient in disguise? His ability to critique food and create a career with highly technical comments like "I wouldn't have a problem polishing the rest of that off!" and "That is truly yummy food!" is further evidence to confirm that he is indeed an egg.

Yours,
ALLINA SCRAMBLE,

Via email.

Plug ugly

Sir,

Remote Controller rightly highlights the BBC's shameless bout of product promotion on The Graham Norton Show (Eye 1248). However, he forgot to mention that after sipping Olivia Newton-John's herbal drink, Ozzy Osbourne, Graham's other guest, gave it his full endorsement by sarcastically pretending to be enlivened by it, before muttering "what a load of bollocks." So a good balance was struck in the end.

BRENDON HOOPER,

London.

Scenes You Seldom See

"There's a really interesting article in this week's Spectator*"*

Brown stuff

Sir,

'Squarebasher' is somewhat behind the times when he refers to Gordon Brown's seat as being Dunfermline East; he has represented Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath since the last boundary review in 2005.

Not that El Gordo is oblivious to the economic and political challenges of the area; his home is now in the same Dunfermline and West Fife constituency as Rosyth, a constituency his party lost to the Liberal Democrats in the 2006 by-election.

GARETH AUBREY,

Cardiff.

Fat lot of good

Sir,

You refer to the Department of Health and Association for the Study of Obesity holding a joint conference on 3 November sponsored by Coca-Cola and Kellogg's, manufacturers of Coke, Walkers Crisps and Coco Pops. (HP Sauce, Eye 1248.)

As any good junk food fan would know Walkers Crisps are a Frito-Lay subsidiary which in turn is owned by PepsiCo, Coca-Cola's big rival.

Yours,
DAVID MAGUIRE,

Via email.

● Apologies. Coca Cola did sponsor the Department of Health/Association for the Study of Obesity conference on obesity. But Coca-Cola does not make Walkers crisps, which are indeed made by Pepsi.

When the fat lady sits...

Sir,

It's funny you should mention the Texas opera house being built with extra-large seats (Music & Musicians, Eye 1248) and imply that we don't need them in London because opera lovers miss meals to be able to get tickets.

I sit in the cheap seats whenever I go, and they are full of fat people. It makes the experience so uncomfortable when someone else is taking up half of your seat.

I think fat people sit up in the cheap seats at Covent Garden because there are no arm rests, and they can spill over with abandon.

You try sitting up there sometime! You'll see what I mean.

ELIZABETH THOMAS,

Reading.

Rage rage

Sir,

Re Rhodri Marsden (Street of Shame, Eye 1248). Rhodri is one of the most diffident people I know and won't admit to half of the talent he possesses. He's just a lovely person. I'm actually rather upset by the tone of your piece, nobody who knows him would say he flies into rages. It would be laughable were it not for the fact that people will read it who don't know him and assume it to be true. I know loads of journalists who actually are cunts and you're picking on one of the few who isn't. He is so modest and self effacing – he should actually be better known as a writer but it is this un-pushyness of his that holds him back.

I have no idea where you got "former boyband wannabe" from. Maybe because he did a series of joky articles where he went to audtion for unsuitable bands? Rhodri played in Scritti Politti recently – they appeared at the Fuji Rocks festival in Japan. I don't think that tallies with the idea that he is any sort of wannabe. Please check your facts.

Fuck you.
NATASHA x.

Via email.

Hub of the problem

Sir,

Can these two booksellers be related?

"On sale now!" Private Eye Annual 2009. Buy online at www.waterstones.com/privateeye" (advertisement, p35, Eye 1248)

"I can't bear to pick up the phone anymore because I know its going to be a customer (rightly) complaining that the book they ordered a month previously hasn't come in." (Waterstone's employee, p26, Eye 1247)

Yours,
LEO TENNANT,

Via email.

Photo opportunity

Sir,

In the light of the BBC pulling an episode of This Week as a result of Andrew Neil describing Diane Abbott and Michael Portillo as a chocolate hobnob and a custard cream, do you have any examples of Andrew Neil improving race relations?

NEIL SAFFER,

London.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"During her imprisonment, she gave birth to two girls aged 11 and 15."
SHAUN LEY, BBC Radio 4
(Clive Lawrence)

"Your body has a mind of its own..."
ALESHA DIXON, BBC1
(Jason Hazeley)

"A wonderful David James save, literally in the dying embers of the game."
JEFF STELLING, Sky Sports
(Andrew Lindsay)

"Of course mistakes are made – some are even accidental."
GRAHAM TAYLOR, Channel 5
(John Eaton)

"Some people want Europe to be a retiring violet."
DAVID MILIBAND, BBC Radio 4
(Rob Taylor)

Death on the Rock, Pt 94

Sir,

In reviewing Christopher Andrew's history of MI5 (Literary Review, Eye 1248) you were too kind in relation to his account of the Gibraltar shootings.

Andrew cleaves loyally to the implausible and self-contradictory version of events offered by officials at the inquest into the deaths of Sean Savage, Danny McCann and Mairead Farrell, the IRA unit that had been planning a bomb attack on a military parade in Gibraltar in March 1988.

"Death On The Rock", made by the This Week team for Thames TV, interviewed four eye-witnesses. Those in a position to have heard any warnings from the SAS soldiers before they opened fire heard none. None saw any threatening movements by the victims. One of them thought McCann and Farrell were trying to surrender when they were shot. No independent witness at the inquest claimed to have heard any warning.

Some reviewers claim Andrew has found new evidence in his research. However, he provides almost nothing not previously known. Indeed, he egregiously eschews any mention of the SAS – preferring "military team" – on grounds of "secrecy": an absurd stance, given that the "military team" was openly identified as SAS in the course of the inquest.

Andrew repeats the official version that Spanish police were asked not to continue their many months of surveillance of the IRA unit once the would-be bombers had arrived at Malaga airport, four days before the planned parade. The Spanish authorities, by contrast, have always insisted they followed the unit all the way to the Gibraltar border, two days later. An unsigned statement to the inquest, in English (a language he did not speak), by a Spanish policeman, confirming the British version was rejected by the coroner and disowned by the policeman himself: not that you would learn that from Andrew.

Why does this claim of non-surveillance matter? Because if a car-bomb was knowingly allowed into Gibraltar, MI5 could have been accused of playing fast and loose with civilian lives. Andrew's version is that the bomb-maker, Savage, drove across the border from Spain unnoticed, but was spotted when he parked his Renault at the edge of the parade ground. He was then joined by McCann and Farrell. They walked back towards the border – more than a mile from the parked car – before splitting up.

At that moment, by complete coincidence we are told, a police siren sounded, entirely unconnected with this massive surveillance operation (involving 70 MI5 and Army personnel and 180 Gibraltar police), prompting the SAS team to leap from their cars and attack their targets before they could run away. The police inspector who testified to having sounded this innocent siren transpired to be the officer in charge of three of the Gibraltar policemen most closely involved in the operation!

The SAS soldiers who cut down McCann and Farrell claimed that their own lives were at risk from perceived threatening movements; and the lives of others might be endangered if a car bomb were detonated by a "button". The same reasoning was used by the two other SAS men, who fired at least 16 shots into Savage after running to catch him.

Andrew claims that press materials were being prepared announcing the arrest of the IRA unit, and that MI5 were surprised to hear they had all been shot. Indeed, only at that point was an attempt made to evacuate the area around the Renault containing the presumed bomb: more than two hours after it had been parked.

The order to evacuate the area around the Renault was not made till after the IRA team was dead: leaving many with the suspicion that this was an elaborate afterthought, of a piece with the rapid spiriting out of Gibraltar of the SAS team and the destruction, suppression and withholding of key evidence found at the scene of the shootings.

Andrew retreats into the defence of "military cock-up" rather than deliberate shooting to kill. Quite why the SAS would be used to execute what he describes as arrest warrants remains a mystery. The inherent implausibility of the remote detonation theory has been repeatedly demonstrated. What cannot be in doubt was that as soon as the SAS men were convinced of the "button job" story, the IRA unit was certain to be killed, not arrested.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID ELSTEIN

Director of Programmes, Thames Television, 1986-1992.

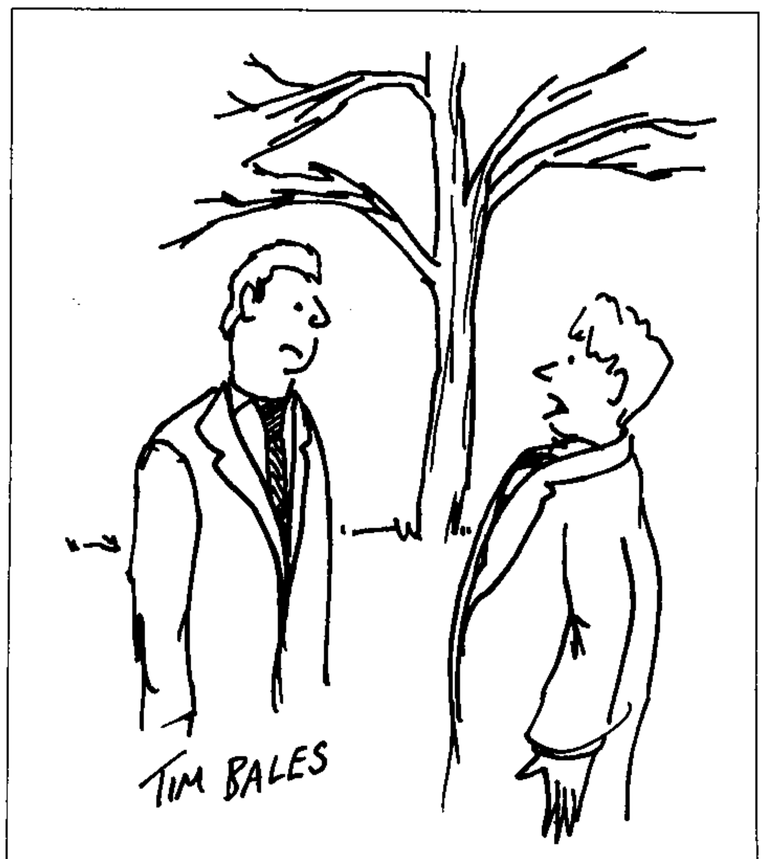
Gnome from home

Sir,

In issue 1248 (Street of Shame) you describe the Daily Mail website as being aimed at "expats eager to read how the old country has gone down the pan in their absence". Nonsense – that's what my Private Eye subscription is for.

NICK SHORT,

Adelaide, Australia.



"Don't blame Seasonal Affective Disorder – you're always bloody miserable"

The Editor gives a cast-iron promise to end this feature

... Surely Tony Blair cannot be President of the EU as he already has a job.

EUAN ENVOY.

... We are sure our fellow Athenian, the comic playwright Harry Stophanes, will have seen the funny side of appearing under the tag "Tragedy!" in Eye 1248. For us tragedians, however, it is no laughing matter. This fatal flaw smacks of what Hugh Briss would call pride before a fall and shows that Pseudo Names is despised by the gods, rejected by mortal man and doomed to die a dreadful death!

E. SKI-LOOSE
SOPHIE CLEESE
YURI. P. DEES.

... Please keep Pseudo Names going. While not everyone's cup of tea, it's music to my ears.

DRUMMOND BASE.

... The end of Pseudo Names? Yeah right!!

PAUL D. UTHERWUN.

... I love your Pseudo Names column: you've brought your humour down to my level.

MARIANA TRENCH.

... Goodbye... and bless.

BEN E. DICTION
VAL E. DICTION.

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

MOST convicted coup plotters in Equatorial Guinea – and there have been many – are released early from prison in a ritual display of omnipotence by a president who himself shot his way to power in 1979 with the support of foreign troops.

But the epiphany apparently experienced by Simon Mann, repentant ex-mercenary and colleague of "Scratcher" and "Smelly", aka Sir Mark Thatcher and Ely Calil, while serving at President Obiang's pleasure in Black Beach prison, does not alone explain the timing of his early release. Nor does it explain the less well reported release of his fellow South African collaborators just ahead of a visit by South Africa's president Jacob Zuma and three weeks before presidential elections in Equitorial Guinea.

While Zuma's people sheepishly deny any deal, Equatorial Guinea's Washington lobbyists insist the release of convicted mercenaries was a humanitarian gesture and a sign of the government's commitment to reform (*see below*). Really? Obiang has a reputation for many things, but it is hard to see how the release of convicted mercenaries helps strengthen his credentials as a compassionate statesman.

Nor are there any real commercial interests between South Africa and EG. The economic boom in EG is over, the oil is running out and what remains is already controlled by American companies. Plans to be a processing centre for the region's gas have proved a massive white elephant.

But Mann, who has a South African mother and prepared his conspiracy in Cape Town, has many well-connected friends in South Africa, as do his fellow conspirators. It seems that lobbying by business and intelligence interests close to the ruling African National Congress – and to Mann and his friends – may have made the difference, persuading Zuma he could repair relations that had soured under Thabo Mbeki, his predecessor and rival.

For Equatorial Guinea, South Africa could also prove a useful ally in its troubled relations with neighbouring Gabon and Cameroon, and ahead of any criticism of a typically idiosyncratic election process, where the president usually scrapes home with just, er, 97 to 99 percent of the vote. Mostly, however, the affair, with its relentless bad publicity for both countries, had just become acutely embarrassing.

Mann says he now wants Scratcher and Smelly to face the judicial music and is keen to help police with their inquiries. But if he really does have the means to drop Thatcher and Calil in the mire, spilling the beans for free may compromise his own bargaining power if he tries to cash in by selling his story. And it still won't explain which of his less famous former friends blew the whistle on the project in the first place, but still allowed him to fly off armed to the teeth and spend five years in various African jails.

YEAH, RIGHT

"Simon Mann was pardoned and released from prison due to health complications requiring ongoing medical treatment... Simon Mann has admitted to participating in a coup attempt, he has also genuinely repented. We have taken this extraordinary measure to prioritize his health and well being... The Government of Equatorial Guinea is in the midst of an ambitious effort to reform our judicial process and humanitarian conditions. Today's release is just one of the proactive steps that... demonstrates the sincerity of our efforts." – *Statement issued on 4 November by US lobbyists Qorvis Communications, LLC and Cassidy & Associates on behalf of the republic of Equatorial Guinea.*

José Olo Obono, the supreme court chief who served as chief prosecutor at the trial... said: "His health is fine. He is very fit... He was operated on for a hernia two months ago, but he is fine now." – *Report in the Guardian, 3 November*

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

"The act of stoning people to death is inhuman and criminal, even if the victims are volunteers, and it is done in the name of tradition," district civil servant Nikunj Srivastava told reporters in Saargaon village in Madhya Pradesh. "Every year at the Gotmar festival, the villagers of Saargaon and Pandhurhna re-enact an ancient story about two lovers from the rival villages who tried to elope, but were stoned to death by angry residents. The climax of the festival involves teams from both villages competing to capture a tree, but it's not simply a sporting event, because rival crowds pelt them, and each other, with rocks and pebbles throughout the contest. There are usually several deaths and hundreds of injuries, many of them serious, and this festival can no longer be tolerated, tradition or not."

Srivastava was speaking shortly after the Madhya Pradesh state authority had announced a ban on the 2009 Gotmar festival. "We've tried to be reasonable, but to no avail. In recent years, attempts were made to replace the stones with rubber balls, but the villagers refused to use them, and carried on throwing rocks and killing each other. Not all local people support the stone-throwing, but they do not speak out because they fear a violent backlash from those villagers who do. The stone-throwers say it is tradition, but then so is suttee [the burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre], and that has been banned. And now Gotmar has been banned too." *(Khaleej Times, 20/8/09. Spotter: Benjamin Sheppard)*

– o –

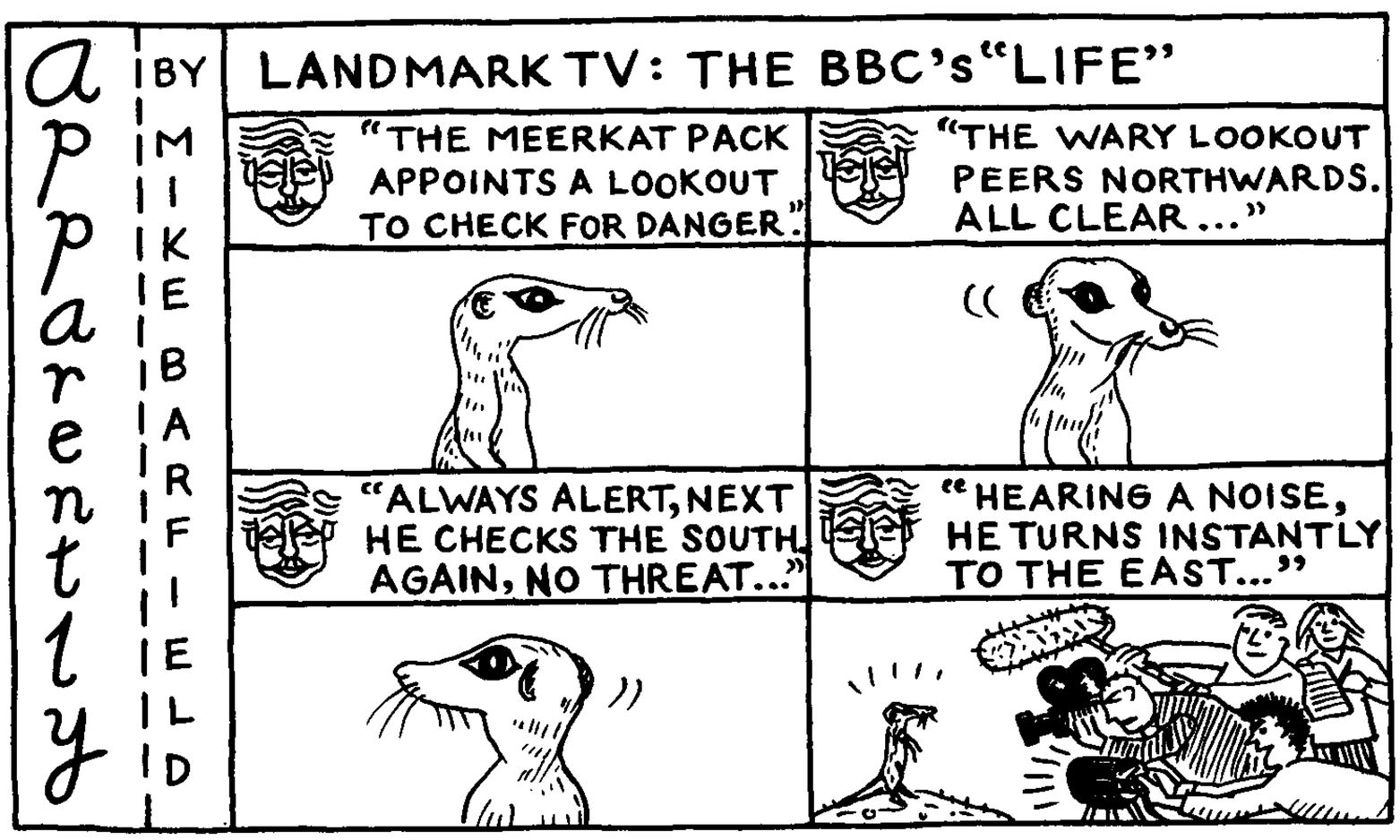
"*Internet speeds are hopelessly slow in South Africa," a spokesman for Unlimited IT told reporters in Pietermaritzburg, "because Telkom controls most of the phone lines, and they won't make the necessary investment to upgrade them. There's a national bandwidth shortage, so speed and connectivity are poor, and the internet is also very expensive. That's why we decided to stage a contest, to see who could transmit data fastest – the Telkom internet system, or a carrier pigeon. "At the same moment we began trying to transmit data to our Durban office, we strapped a data card to the leg of an eleven-month-old pigeon called Winston, and released him from our office here in Pietermaritzburg. He took one hour and eight minutes to fly 80 kms to our office in Durban, where the data card was removed from his leg and the information was downloaded. The total time taken was two hours, six minutes and fifty-seven seconds, by which time only four per cent of the same data had been transferred using a Telkom line. We've asked Telkom to comment, but so far they haven't replied."* (Gulf News, 11/9/09. Spotter: David Dallison)

– o –

"For over a year, we have been trying to arrest Thomas Eri for illegal sexual activities," Inspector Adam Busil of the Papua New Guinea police told reporters in Morobe village, north of Port Moresby, "and this time we thought we had him cornered. We'd heard reports that he had founded a sex cult here in Morobe, and that he was promising villagers a bumper banana crop if they had sex in public. He told them their banana crop would increase tenfold every time they had sex in front of him, and they believed him. So many of the villagers began having sex in public, because bananas are a very important crop in Morobe province.

"Early on Saturday morning, a dozen armed policemen came to the village, surrounded his

hut, and ordered him to come out. At first, there was no reply, then he came out naked, but refused to surrender. He used his two wives as human shields to avoid being shot at, ran to the edge of the village, and fled into the wilderness, followed by seven of his followers. I am sure the villagers know where he is hiding, but they won't tell us. Probably because this year's banana crop is the biggest on record." *(Post Courier [Papua New Guinea], 15/9/09. Spotter: Benjamin Pogrund)*


Apparently
BY MIKE BARFIELD
LANDMARK TV: THE BBC's "LIFE"
"THE MEERKAT PACK APPOINTS A LOOKOUT TO CHECK FOR DANGER."
"THE WARY LOOKOUT PEERS NORTHWARDS. ALL CLEAR..."
"ALWAYS ALERT, NEXT HE CHECKS THE SOUTH, AGAIN, NO THREAT..."
"HEARING A NOISE, HE TURNS INSTANTLY TO THE EAST..."

PRIME MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 57

From the Desk of the Supreme Leader

Comrades,

As you will be aware, my saving of the world's banking system last year was so successful that I have decided to do it all again this week.

Last time, Comrades will recall, I punished the banks which had recklessly lent too much money by lending them £50 billion of public money.

Only I had thought of that idea, which was why the rest of the world was left open-mouthed in astonishment and admiration. A clear measure of how successful this policy has been is that our banks have so mended their ways that they are no longer prepared to lend any money to anyone.

I am therefore rewarding them for their new-found prudence by giving them £100 billion, which should leave them enough to pay reasonable bonuses to all their hard-working Comrade directors.

And that's not all. I intend, comrade colleagues in Brussels, to break up the hateful and oppressive monopoly of the mega-banks which I set up last year, by splitting them up into new People's Banks.

This will include the Royal Virgin Bank of Branson *("Trust me with your money")*; the National Tesco Bank, to be known as NatTesc (*"Every large amount helps"*), the Bonnie and Clydeside (Chairman Sir Fred Goodwin – *"Better Shred than dead"*)' and finally the Bernie Madoff's People's Bank of England (London, New York, Alcatraz – *"The buck disappears here"*).

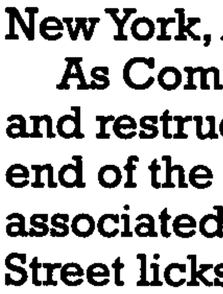
As Comrades will recognise, this wholesale reform and restructuring of the banking system spells the end of the corrupt age of profligate global capitalism associated with the discredited former leader and Wall Street lickspittle, Comrade Blair.

Yours,

Gordon Brown

The Supreme Leader

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2009



It is at this time of year that we try to remember why we are in Afghanistan... er... it is the time that we remember our troops who are defending the democratically un-elected President Karzai and fighting to preserve whatever it is that we think is worth preserving in that far off land.

Today we remember especially all those who have given their lives in the ongoing fight against the Afghan police.

And let us remember too how appropriate it is that we should mark this time by wearing a poppy – a symbol of all those other poppies grown in "Afghan fields" by the Taliban, in order that men and women can lay down their lives on the streets of Glasgow. Talking of which, it is time for me to lay down myself, with the curtains drawn. G.B.

Formerly 'Drawing All Faiths Together', Now 'Doing Anything For Tesco'

To the Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Mr Netanyahu (or may I call you Benjamin?),

I'm sorry I haven't been in touch for a while over the peace process business, but I have been kept rather busy elsewhere in the world, as you may have noticed!

First, they wanted me to be the President of Europe, then I had to help out my colleagues at J. P. Morgan by attending a prayer meeting in New York, and finally I had a very important engagement in China, speaking at the Shanghai Retail Businesswoman Of The Year Regional Awards Lunch (truly it is said that a great man's work is never done – and in my case that is very, very true!).

But now to more serious matters. I have been approached by a good friend who has come up with a very imaginative proposal for bringing the two communities in your country closer together. The great advantage of his idea is that it offers thousands of jobs and is entirely self-financing.

We have an ideal site in mind for this project in Jerusalem, which is central and open to access by members of all the main local faith groups.

May I present to you the "Dome of The Rock Tesco" (open seven days a week, except Friday and Saturday, which, as you know, Benny, are holy days!).

To allay any security fears, there will be a very substantial barrier or wall built down the centre of the retail space, thus ensuring that those purchasing matzos and chicken soup will not be inconvenienced by having to mingle with those customers asking for their land back (surely for "Own-Brand Halal Meal For Two" Ed.).

This visionary business opportunity from Tesco, I am sure you will agree, Ben old friend, deserves your full and earnest consideration, as a step forward to bringing together myself with a lot of money. (Is this right? Ed.)

Shalom,

Rev. T. Blair

Chief Executive, D.A.F.T.

(former vicar of St. El Albion's)

"You'll like his mate, he's a scream"

THE PAPER THAT SUPPORTS OUR TORIES!

THE Sun

REMEMBER TO VOTE CONSERVATIVE

Friday, November 13, 2009

FURY AT CENOTAPH AS BROWN SNUBS BRITISH HEROES

The Look of Evil

by Sun Staff Rupert Murdoch

ANGER erupted in the offices of the Sun yesterday when it was revealed that they had no good stories rubbishing Gordon Brown.

It was then that furious sub-editor Ron Snotter came to the rescue whilst watching Sky TV. His solution was simple. Make it up.

And within seconds Gordon Brown had done the following:

● Failed to bow his head at the Cenotaph unlike Her Majesty and David Cameron, God Bless Him. Through out the 2-minute silence the Prime Minister rudely showed his contempt for army veterans by staring straight ahead as if he was drunk or on ecstasy.

● Sent a letter to the mother of a fallen hero which he had deliberately and callously hand-written himself. Handwriting experts told the Sun, "This is the work of a deeply crazed individual who may well have written it under the influence of alcohol or Class A drugs".

● Urinated on the Cenotaph in full view of Her Majesty the Queen and other world leaders. *(Is this too much, Ed? No. Rupert.)*

THE SUN SAYS

WHATEVER YOU SAY MR MURDOCH, SIR

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Draft Speech for Justification of War

~~2004~~ 2009

We cannot just cut and run. Our troops are in ~~Iraq~~ Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. They will stay for as long as the ~~Iraqi~~ Afghan government needs them. They are the front line in the fight against terrorism and if we were to withdraw from ~~Iraq~~ Afghanistan there would be civil war between the various ~~Iraqi~~ Afghan factions and a return to lawlessness.

To sound a retreat without completing our mission to bring stable democracy to ~~Iraq~~ Afghanistan would send a strong message to ~~al-Quaeda~~ the Taliban that they had achieved a victory. The sad but inevitable recent losses in ~~Basra~~ Helmand only reinforce our determination to see the job through.

~~T. Blair~~ G. Brown

Memo to MoD: Prepare for retreat. Suggest date in ~~2007~~ 2010 please - if possible before election. Thank you.

ON OTHER PAGES

From the Archives: Why we must never let the Russians win. There must be no retreat from Crimea – 1854

RECORD LOTTERY WINNERS 'THRILLED' BY BUMPER PAY-OUT

by Our Economics Staff **Jack Pot**

THE British winners of the biggest ever single pay-out came forward yesterday to claim their multi-million pound jackpot.

The two luckiest men in Britain are both coincidentally senior executives of leading British banks, Sir Phil Boots of the Royal Bank of Scotland and Sir Ivor Bonus of Lloyds TSB.

They each made an initial modest outlay of 0p and were rewarded by an incredible return of £90 billion each.

Officials at the National Lottery (HM Treasury) had initially been surprised when no-one came forward to collect their winnings, but it emerged that both men had been on extended holidays – Sir Phil on his yacht, "The Jolly Rich", and Sir Ivor on his yacht, "The Jolly Rich II".

Looking tanned and fat, Sir Phil told reporters, "I cannot believe my good fortune. When Mr Darling rang me with the good news I thought he was joking. But no, the giant cheque is mine."

Completely Bankers

Asked how he would spend the money Sir Phil said, "I'm certainly not going to put it in a bank. That would be madness. No, I will give some to worthy causes such as my colleagues' bonuses and the rest I shall invest in champagne, cigars and other luxury items."

Sir Ivor added, "This will not change my life. I have always been extremely rich and quite unpleasant and I intend to carry on this way."

Advertisement

ACTION MANN THE MUST-HAVE TOY THIS CHRISTMAS!

YES! IT'S ACTION MANN®

DARE DEVIL Old-Etonian mercenary figure who tries to topple African dictators – and fails!

Months of fun as you put him in jail and then, just when you're getting bored, hey presto! He's out again.

Pull **Action Mann's®** string and he says, *"It was all Mark Thatcher's fault!"*

Action Mann comes with:

- Old Etonian tie
- Shackles
- Cheque from Jeffrey Archer
- Pardon from President Obiang

Price: 200 new guineas.

The film based on award-winning columnist Glenda Slagg's touching and fascinating memoir of her early life

'A Beducation (Geddit?)' (18)

Glamorous, gorgeous, pouting 16-year-old Glenda Slagg (Carey Mulligan) stands on the threshold of life. But then she is seduced by a charismatic older man, press baron Lord Gnome (Christopher Lee), who offers her a job writing rubbish for his newspaper. Will she give in and ruin her life? Yes.

★★★★ *"Donchaluvit?"* Telegraph
★ *"Donchahateit?"* Guardian
★★★ *"Byeee!!!"* Hello magazine

Great Tales of Chivalry No. 94

Sir Boris and the Oiks

AND IT happened in those days in the streets of London that a young and innocent maiden was being beaten up by some even younger maidens. And she cried out for help. "Help, help!" she cried. But there was no one to come to her aid.

Then suddenly she heard the tinkling of a bicycle bell and in the darkness a manly voice called out, "Cripes, what's going on here?"

And the maiden replied, "My prayers have been answered. You are my knight in a shiny plastic helmet!"

"Clear off, you oiks!", said Sir Boris, as he dismounted from his trusty bicycle and waved his umbrella at the iron-bar-wielding miscreants.

"Gosh, it is Sir Boris!" cried the maiden, as the oikettes fled in terror from the frowning mien of the gallant knight.

"I confess that I voted for Sir Ken, the Red Knight," she spake coyly, "but now I realise that in a fight you really need Sir Boris."

And, with danger past, the very parfit gentle knight even offered to take the maiden home on the back of his bicycle.

But, knowing of his reputation, she graciously replied, "No, thank you, kind sir, I think I'll walk."

But Sir Boris was glad in his heart to have performed such an act of chivalry, saying to himself, "Blimey, Sir Dave back at Cameronlot will be jolly batey when he reads about this in the *Daily Telegraph*."

POETRY CORNER GUEST SPECIAL!

A Haiku Written By Famous Haiku Writer, Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy, aka 'Rumpy of the Belgians'

So. Farewell then
Tony Blair.
You are not to be
President of Europe.
The apple blossom
Has blown away
On the wind.

Translator's note: This haiku by Mr Rumpy Pumpy reads better in the original Walloon, in which form it has the classically correct number of only 17 syllables.

Lines Written On The 50th Anniversary Of The M1 Motorway

So. M1 –
You are 50 today.

"There is a 10-mile
Tailback north of
The Watford Gap.
Due to an
Articulated lorry
Which has shed
Its load."

That was your
Catchphrase.

E.J. Thribb (M17½)

In Memoriam Norman Painting, Actor

So. Farewell
Then
Norman Painting.

Yes, you played
Phil Archer on
The Archers
For 59
Years.

And were in
The Guinness
Book of Records.

All together now,
Dum di dum
Di dum di dum
Dum di dum
Di da da.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

ANDREW MARR

Can I first of all ask you...

No, I'm afraid that it's a private matter and there's an outstanding injunction on this column.

May I then...

No, I'm afraid you are not allowed to even mention that there is an injunction.

Can we then talk about other people's spoons?

Certainly. They are very interesting. I mean, the things politicians get up to with their spoons. Gordon Brown, David Cameron. It's scandalous, I tell you.

Can we turn back to your spoons...

No, you'll be hearing from my solicitors.

Thank you.

NEXT WEEK: *Keith Schilling – "Me And My Shillings".*

the PREMIERSH*TS

PAUL WOOD
WELL THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT DROGBA DOES SEEM TO HAVE STOPPED HARASSING REFEREES
DROGBA SHAMED BY 8YR OLD SON
AND THE BAD NEWS?
THAT IT'S GOING TO BE AT LEAST ANOTHER 8 YEARS...
BEFORE NEW DAD ROONEY DOES THE SAME!
FUCKIN' TWAT!!
TOO
ROONEY BOOKED FOR DISSENT AGAIN!

'GIVING ADVICE' MORE DANGEROUS THAN RIDING A HORSE

by Our Medical Staff **Dr L.S. Dee**

OFFERING advice on drug classification to government ministers is more dangerous than going out for a ride on a horse, Professor Nutt warned today.

"The facts speak for themselves. Very few people who indulge in equestrian pursuits are sacked by Alan Johnson," he said, "whereas my research shows that 100% of those suggesting changes to the narcotics classification system are summarily dismissed and told their careers are dead.

"So the message is clear," he concluded. "Kids! Don't get addicted to science. You'll become a scientific adviser in no time and after that you'll end up jobless in the gutter."

Exclusive To All Newspapers

WILL THE TWO NO-HOPERS PULL OFF AN UNLIKELY VICTORY?

They have silly hair! They're annoying! They're irritating! And neither has a shred of talent.

Yet the whole country is talking about them.

Can Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling go on and win the next election?

"We admire their thick skin and tenacity," said X Factor twins John and Edward Grimes. "If we'd have had some of the terrible things people say to them said to us, we'd be in pieces. Good luck to them."

"A victory for talentless nonentities like Brown and Darling would be a disaster and put young talent off entering British politics for life," moaned Simon Cowell.

It's Gordistair!

● ***Do you think the plucky underdogs can win it??***

Then phone our special Gnome 'ZZZ Factor' phone line (calls charged at £18 a minute. Minutes last 18 seconds).

Daily Mail

COMMENT

Of Course Professor Nuttcase Must Be Sacked

FOR once, Alan Johnson has got something right. If a so-called drugs expert goes round telling toddlers and teenagers that to go out and get stoned on ecstasy and weed is better for their health than falling off a horse after a couple of glasses of wine, then it's a no-brainer.

This potty professor has become a major danger to the health of everyone in these islands. The only advice we would all like to offer him is to "get nutted".

On other pages: Letters supporting our point of view from 15 professors of psychiatry, pharmacology, neurology, etc.

guardian

Of course Professor Nutt-Guilty should be reinstated

If anyone should be sacked, it's Alan Johnson, for his arrogant refusal to listen to genuine science in the person of the highly-respected Professor Nutt.

How typical of this high-handed politician to imagine that he knows better than one of the most distinguished scientists in the country.

When Professor Nutt analyses the dangers of moderate cannabis and ecstasy usage, comparing them with the proven risks of such extreme sports as horse-riding or opening a bottle of Chardonnay, he deserves to be listened to with proper attention.

The only honourable course left to the Home Secretary is to resign forthwith and admit that he is the real "nut".

On other pages: Letters supporting our point of view from 15 professors of psychiatry, pharmacology and neurology.

Dave Snooty AND HIS PALS

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT DRUGS - WHAT'S DAVE GOING TO SAY?
ER . . . I . . . ER . . .
DON'T BE SUCH A WEED!
PROF NUTTY
WEREN'T YOU HEAD OF POT AT ETON?
OR WAS HE THE MORE SNORTY TYPE, EH, READERS?
LOOK YOU ROTTERS, CAN WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING LESS EMBARRASSING?
AYE, 'APPEN WE WANT TO TALK ABOUT T'EUROPE!
OH NO! LET'S TALK ABOUT DRUGS!!!
SORRY CHAPS - TIME FOR A EU-TURN!
HOW VERY NON - YOU!!!
REFER-ENDED
IT'S A CAST-ASIDE IRON GUARANTEE, EH, READERS? CHORTLE! CHORTLE!

UPROAR GREETS NEW MP RULES

by Our Political Staff **Peter O'Bore**

WESTMINSTER erupted in fury last night when Sir Christopher Kelly unveiled his shock new proposals for curbing MPs' abuse of their allowances system.

Said Sir Christopher, "I hope this will mark the beginning of a new era, when our politicians again regain the trust and respect of the nation."

But MPs were quick to condemn Kelly's recommendations as "jolly unfair, outrageous, absurdly draconian, and in many ways far worse than Hitler's Germany."

THOSE PROPOSALS IN FULL

HOUSING

MPs will in future be allowed no more than three homes, only one of which may be used as a love-nest for recreational purposes, or as a temporary hostel for illegal immigrants.

FAMILY MEMBERS

MPs will no longer be permitted to employ their wives, children, parents or civil partners in any capacity whatsoever, whether secretarial, managerial or marsupial. This will not, of course, apply to mistresses, cohabitees or rent boys.

FOOD AND DRINK

MPs will not be allowed to claim overnight subsistence allowances of more than £2,000 per meal, not to include any wines more agreeable than Jacob Rees-Mogg's Creek Somerset Shiraz (£599).

TROUSER PRESS

MPs staying in an ordinary 5-star hotel while on parliamentary business shall only be permitted to claim for hire of a trouser press for no more than 20 minutes.

Kelly's final recommendation was that "the nation's desire to see a wholesale crackdown on the wasting of public money should be met by the setting-up of a new supervisory body, IPSA (the Inordinate Parliamentary Spending Authority), to be headed by the distinguished lawyer, Sir Ian Kennedy, who cannot be expected to take on such an onerous and responsible task for a salary of less than £500,000 p.a. for a three-day lunch *(Surely 'three-day week'? Ed)*.

Where were you when you heard the news about Kennedy?

MOST of us will never forget the time and the place when we heard Sir Ian Kennedy, newly appointed as the £700-a-day head of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, had been deserted by his wife.

"It came as no surprise," said one friend of the professor, "but what was really shocking was to find out he was a friend of Alistair Campbell."

Friends said that Sir Ian was "in a fragile state of mind" and perhaps was not ideally placed to take on the demanding role of sitting at a desk not doing very much (surely "combatting sleaze at the highest level").

However, there are hopes that his £100,000 p.a. salary will cheer him up a bit.

Said Alistair Campbell, "You fucking scumbags. Ian Kennedy is worth 100 of you bastards any day. So fuck off."

Tell us where *you* were when the sad news about Kennedy – unless you were on the toilet reading the Mail on Sunday in which case we already know.

DUNCAN SPEAKS

MR DAVID CAMERON

A Solemn Pledge To The Voters of Britain

IN RECENT months I have, on many occasions, given a firm promise that, if and when I become Prime Minister, I would bolt the stable door.

In no way has this promise in any way been altered by the fact that the stable door is now wide open and the horse can be clearly seen running away over the hills.

In the light of this quite unexpected development, it is still my very firm intention to put a triple lock on the stable door.

This will ensure the following desirable outcomes in the interests of Britain:

- no horse will ever get out of the stable again
- the door will remain firmly closed in perpetuity
- if by any chance, at any time in the future, there is any suggestion that the door should be unlocked, I pledge that I will at once enter into discussions with our 26 neighbours in order to see whether they will allow us to keep it closed.

I hope this will be the end of the matter, and that we shall not have to waste any further time on interminable and pointless discussions about horses, stables and locks.

Notes&queries

I have read in the paper that the Manchester United footballer Wayne Rooney has named his newly-born son 'Kai'. Do any readers know the origin of this unusual nomenclature?

(Rev. Mandy Hassock-Smith, E. Sussex)

● "Kai" is the ancient Egyptian word for 'swan", an animal which was believed to be sacred, on account of its rarity in the Nile Delta. The swan-headed god Kai-Roo can be seen in the burial chamber of the Pharaoh King Tutiphusupportas (Late to Middle Kingdom 2094-5094 BC).
Dr. Ryan O'Spearmint, Professor of Egyptology, Waterford University, Co. Durham

● Dr O'Spearmint could not be further from the truth. Kai (which is pronounced to rhyme with Pi) is the highest in a range of inaccessible mountains in Northern Japan, discovered in 1328 by the celebrated Japanese Explorer Ho Su Kai after whom the peak was named.
Sir Nicholas Tobasco, FRCS, Travellers Club

● What a lot of bollocks! These two supposedly learned gentlemen need to get out more. Anyone with kiddies knows there is a brilliant computer game called Death Judgement 7 in which the ninja assassin who does battle with the army of zombie killer ants is called ***Kai***!! It is obvious to me that Wayne is a Death Judgement 7 aficionado and has probably, whilst assuming the avatar "Kai", amassed, as I have, over 7 million zombie ant "kills".
Ron Gazza, London Cab No. 7742358
(PS. I should like to take this opportunity to wish Wayne, Colleen and baby Kai good health and happiness in years to come.)

Answers please to the following:

What makes rain wet? Did Hitler play the banjo? What is Lembit Opik's real name?

"The tabloids have just offered another hundred Kai, Coleen"

U.N. 'DESPERATE TO AVERT CRISIS'

by Our Showbiz Staff **Russell Tweet**

THE U.N. security council met last night in emergency session in an attempt to broker a peace deal between Stephen Fry and Twitter.

"The whole world has been rocked by the news that Stephen Fry might leave Twitter because someone was slightly rude to him," said the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "this is surely the greatest crisis the world has even known, and will ever know for all eternity."

Predictions that stock markets would plunge, and hundreds of millions of people would be left homeless as a result, thankfully proved unfounded when a few hours later Stephen Fry apologised for his "hissy fit" and resumed tweeting once again about his "having a cup of tea" *(cont. 94 times a day)*

●Meanwhile, celebrities everywhere were devastated at the news that an ordinary member of the public had used the internet to call Stephen Fry "dull".

"I would never have guessed that people were using such highly derogatory words such as 'dull' when discussing celebrities on the internet," said a horrified Britney Spears. "I certainly hope no one has ever been as abusive as that about me on the net."

"I always assumed the internet was a lovely, kind, forgiving, gentle place," added a crestfallen Lindsay Lohan, "but if people are using horrible words like 'dull' on it, then obviously I must be wrong." *(cont. p. 94)*

THE KENT MESSENGER

Friday, 13 November, 2009

Fat Boy Starves To Death

by Harry 'Mount' Wharton

A PUPIL at Greyfriars School has become the latest victim of the postal strike. William "Billy" Bunter, known affectionately as the Fat Owl of the Remove, was expecting a postal order from his uncle, which would have provided enough tuck and fizzy pop to sustain him throughout the rest of the Michaelmas Term.

But, tragically, due to industrial action by members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), Greyfriars has received no post for over a week, and the once-chubby youngster was found lifeless, suffering severe malnutrition and staring through the tuck shop window at assorted sherbet dabs, cream buns and *(cont. p. 94)*

Daily Mail

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2009

BBC'S NIGHT OF SHAME — Why Aren't They Wearing Poppies?

by Phil Buttonhole

YOU'D think the BBC would have learned their lesson – but no, yet again they have offended the whole country.

The deliberate snub by the meerkats on David Attenborough's "Life" programme is an insult to our war heroes living and dead.

In the very week that we remember the fallen, the meerkats blatantly spit on the graves of our servicemen and women by refusing to wear poppies when appearing on air.

Last night there were calls for the meerkats to be sacked and their excessive salaries to be drastically reduced.

Said one outraged Daily Mail reporter, "This is typical of the left-wing, liberal, anti-British Broadcasting Corporation, which should be broken up and the profitable parts sold to Lord Rothermere."

Advertisement

From the House of Cameron

It shines! It polishes! It wipes away nasty euro stains! Guaranteed to make everything look good on the surface, it is particularly effective on delicate negotiating tables and stubborn back benches.

New fishy smell!

PLEDGE – best used before date of Lisbon Treaty.
(from the makers of Mr Brussel)

Warning! Can cause unexpected headaches

THE BROON-ITES
THE SPORRAN-CLAD SOCIALISTS WHO SNEER AT SCIENCE!
Fountain and Jamieson
A SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH LAB IN DEEPEST JOCKSHIRE, TH' NOO...
AH'VE DONE HEAPS O' TESTS, ANGUS AND AH'M GANNAE RECOMMEND DOWNGRADING FRAE CLASS B DOON TAE CLASS C!
YE DINNAE HAVE TAE BE ~~MAD~~ NUTTS TAE WORK HERE -BUT IT HELPS
RATS
DOG
MICE
HAGGIS
JINGS! YE CANNAE DAE THAT, WILLIE, THINK O' THE DANGERS TO HEALTH, TH' PARANOIA, TH' PANIC ATTACKS...
NAE, ANGUS, I HAVE TAE FACE MA' SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS...
EDEN
MAJOR
CHAMBERLAIN
GUID
RUBBISH
...HE'S DEFINITELY A CLASS C PRIME MINISTER!
HENRY DAVIES

That Honorary Degree Citation In Full

SALUTAMUS DAVIDUM PARADINUM FROSTICUM, TELEVISIONIS PERSONALITATEM LONGEVITISSIMUS (AETATE CVII). PRIMO SATIRISTUS ANNO DOMINI CMMLXII CELEBRATUS QUAM PRESENTOR "HOC ERAT SEPTEM DIES HOC ERAT" (ANNO DOMINI CMMLXII) CUM MILLICENTIA MARTINA ET GULIELMO RUSHTONE DIRECTUS AB NEDDO TWINKIO (AKA SHERRINO) BENE COGNATUS CUM OMNIBUS POPULIS PER CATCHUS PHRASUS "SALVE, BONUS VESPERUS ET AVE" TUNC, QUAM MAGNUS INQUISITOR, INTERROGAVIT MULTOS CELEBRITATES PER EXEMPLO HAROLDO WISLONE ET EMILIO SAVUNDRA, CROOKUS TREMENDICUS. SED CLIMACTICUS EXTRAORDINARIUS ERAT SUO CONFRONTATIONE CUM RICARDO NIXONE, EX-PRESIDENTE AMERICANO POST SCANDALE "AQUAPORTA" (SUBSEQUENTER TRANSLATUS IN TEATRO SPECTACULO ET BLOCKBUSTERENSIS CINEMATOGRAPHICUS "FROSTUM NIXONUM"). NUNC DISMISSUS AB BBC RETIRAVIT AD AL JAZEERAM, CANALIS ARABICUM OBSCURANTICUS. TRISTIS FINALIS AD CAREERUM GLITTERENSIS. VALE, BONUS NOCTUS, ET GAUDEAMUS.

© The University of Winchester (formerly The M3 Polytechnic)

Bryony Gordon

Fleet Street's Most Controversial Columnist

Dog mess on the pavements – I know you're not meant to say this, but I hate it! Why can't dog owners just pick it up? Here's a suggestion that will have the PC brigade foaming at the mouth – pop the poo in a plastic bag and put it in a bin! I'm sorry if I've upset anyone but it's what I think.

The Second World War – OK, shoot me down in flames, but I happen to think that Britain was on the right side. Sorry if you're a Nazi, but British troops fought for the freedom of columnists like me to state the truth – however uncomfortable it may be. So I'll say it again. I'm personally *glad* that Adolf Hitler was defeated.

I love Cheryl Cole – there, I've said it. I know no-one else does and its going to annoy millions of you out there – but I've never been afraid to fly in the face of public opinion. Whatever anyone else may think, *I'm* sticking to my guns – Cheryl Cole is very pretty and quite sweet. And you can send me all the hate mail you like, it won't change my mind!

(This is dynamite. More please, Bryony. "Thirsty" W.L.)

From The Message Boards

Members of the online community respond to the major issues of the day...

Newcastle police order drunks to clean up their own mess

The officers did no more than make the street-foulers right their wrongs. Inasmuch and insofar as they did so do, then, as Isaiah taught, they did no more than the men to whom Rabshakeh was sent, who did no more than eat their own dung and drink their own piss. – ***Mr_Salmon***

This follows my proposal that the armed forces should urinate on war memorials with dignified discipline and make the yobs lick them clean. Now here's another idea. The law allows any pregnant woman to urinate anywhere at any time. SUCH IS THE STATUS WE ACCORD MOTHERHOOD. What better way of showing our contempt for the yobs than to organise a taskforce of law-abiding ladies with child? They could urinate on the streets and ORDER the yobs to lick the pavements clean. Any yobs lying unconscious would be urinated upon and they could lick themselves clean when they finally awaken. The ladies would relieve themselves with pride and the yobs would get a taste of their own medicine. – ***Public_Spirited_Citizen***

its sea monky sea monky do they shuld sit an example like in saudi wen they chopd the head off the pedo an put his body on public displey lets hav 3 strike's an ur out FIRST a fence get down on hand's and nee's an scrub up the wee with a two'thbrush then brush there teeth with it secund a fence no two'thbrush just lick it up thirde a fence OFF WITH THERE HEAD'S an put the body's in the street THEY WONT DO THAT AGAIN IN A HURY – ***Broken_Britan***

Beautifully put, Broken. As victims' champion Sara Payne MBE says, the punishment must fit the crime. – ***Rot_in_hell_Myra***

sara payne this sara payne that its all me me me no mention of maddie in sarahs law lazy cow dint even think up a difrent name 4 her owne little girls name scum rip with the angle's little sarah y did u die an not ur mum – ***Justice_4_Maddie***

DIARY

GYLES BRANDRETH

8 March 1960: Happy Birthday Dear Me! 12 today!

The Headmaster approaches me personally and wishes me Many Happy Returns of The Day!! I tell him how simply WONDERFUL he's looking, and insist ("there's nothing in the world I'd like more headmaster!") on walking with him. He is understandably overjoyed, but says he'd rather walk alone. Poor old fellow – no-one likes to be outshone!! Onwards and upwards!

8 March 1970: Happy Birthday Dear Me! 22 today!!

That's twenty-two years of fun and laughter and all-round entertainment for all my family and friends! I've had the most MARVELLOUS year with *literally* billions of achievements to my name! I've built a full-size traction engine (The Gyles Brandreth) out of 5,734,297 matches, I've written, directed and starred in my own musical ("Gyles: The Musical"), I've published *The Gyles Brandreth Book of Irish Knock-Knock Jokes*, I've become the first ever person to sing "Yes We Have No Bananas" backwards on Radio Luxembourg, I've made best friends with Fanny Cradock, Gilbert Harding and Mr Pastry, I've climbed the world's smallest hill, and I've heard an hilarious new John Gielgud blooper (he once introduced Edith Evans to Binkie Beaumont as "Edwina Evans"!!!) – a sure-fire winner for my new *Gyles Brandreth Book of Hilarious New John Gielgud Bloopers*! I haven't even mentioned my exciting new range of brightly-coloured pom-poms to brighten up your dowdy old oven gloves! Next stop: I plan to ascend Mount Everest!

8 March 1980: Happy Birthday Dear Me! 32 today!!!

I may not yet have quite managed to climb Mount Everest – the offer from the gentlemen's mountainwear sponsors simply wasn't jolly enough, financially! – but I did manage to break the world record for playing 24 different songs on the spoons in under two minutes while standing on one foot on a lilo dressed as a nun!

Yesterday, I attended a formal dinner for all us former Presidents of the Oxford Union. Frankly I stood out from the others. For a start, I was the only one who came as Little Bo Peep. And I commanded the respect of one and all by standing on my head and downing a glass of water whilst simultaneously humming the National Anthem!

This year I wrote 32 books, including the bestselling *501 Uses for a Daffodil*, I ghost-wrote the *Simply Fantastic Michael Miles Quiz Book*, I was paid nearly £17,542 for telling my ten best John Gielgud Bloopers at 167 luncheons, I continued to present my own daily mid-morning phone-in programme on Radio Solent, I masterminded the Potty Putty Museum in Bradford-on-Avon and I helped market a splendid new keep-fit machine which lets you run flat-out without getting anywhere! All this and my new best friend Jeffrey Archer has assured me that if ever I feel like becoming an MP he'll see to it that I'm Chief Secretary to the Treasury before the year's out!

Next aim: to climb Mount Snowdon!

8 March 1990: Happy Birthday Dear Me! 42 today!!!

I never quite managed to climb Mount Snowdon – but at least I've done the next best thing, which is to make the world's largest sherry trifle while dressed as Jemima Puddleduck!!

Other noteworthy achievements over this most tremendous of all years: I sucked my way through 58 delicious fruit pastilles in under four minutes on the marvellous Radio Stoke-on-Trent, I was appointed Vice President of the Yo-Yo Club of Great Britain, I was runner-up in the Tie Wearer of the Year semi-final, I launched Betamax, a revolutionary new videotape that's set to take the world by storm, I became best friends with Monty Modlyn, Captain Mark Phillips and all three Beverly Sisters, I've done voice-overs for Clive Sinclair's simply wonderful C5, and I've just handed in my fantastic tome, *Absolutely the Best: 100 Years of Asbestos!*, which the publishers are thrilled to bits with – they're sure it'll sell for as long as houses continue to be insulated with asbestos!

We arranged a tremendous birthday dinner, with guests Mr and Mrs Charlie Drake, Larry Grayson, Magnus Pyke, the Tim Rices, the Lionel Blairs, the Jeffrey Archers and the Krankies. Larry told a truly classic anecdote about John Gielgud – apparently, in a fit of madness he once mistook Eileen Atkins for Maggie Smith!!! Cue the sound of clangers dropping!

Promise to self: in the next five years I shall certainly climb the Eiffel Tower!

8 March 2000: Happy Birthday Dear Me! 52 today!!!!

I still haven't got round to climbing the Eiffel Tower, but at least I have spoken on the art of plate-spinning to the Epsom and Ewell Back Pain Association Annual Dinner, and I must say it went down marvellously well!!

Today I finish my *Illustrated History of the Novelty Pullover*, tomorrow I write my Life of William *Shakespeare* (now they'll HAVE to take me seriously), the next day I get going on *Gyles Brandreth's Great Big Book of Fun Party Games Involving Balloons* and over the weekend I'm ghosting *The Michael Barrymore Book of Totally Impossible Brain-Teasers*. Meanwhile, plans for my National Museum of Cocktail Party Umbrellas in Rottingdean are coming on apace.

Incidentally, I have become terrific chums with The Duke of Edinburgh! My witty comebacks really do brighten up his life!! The last time I saw him, I was towards the front of the crowd and he rushed over and said – and I quote – "What the bloody hell are you doing here, Brandreth! I thought I told you to keep the hell away!"

What a truly marvellous character! Needless to say, I came back with this truly classic riposte: "I do so admire your energy, sir – I frankly don't know how you do it! Do remember me to Her Majesty!" One for the memoirs, methinks!

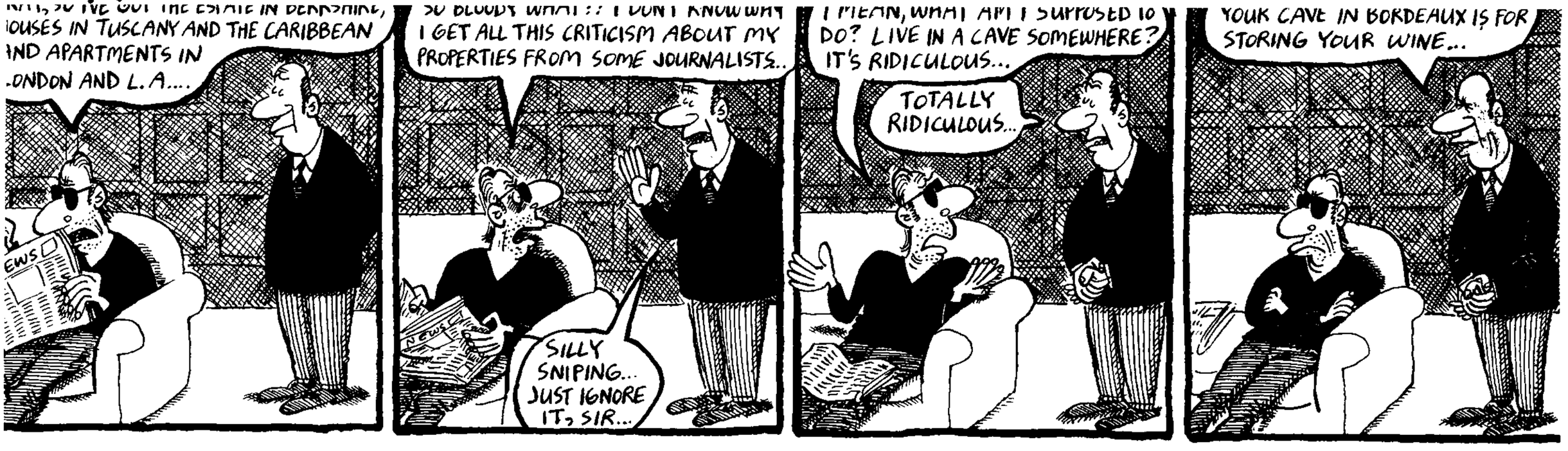
8 March 2010: Happy Birthday Dear Me! 62 today!!!!! I approach the Duke of Edinburgh personally and tell him the marvellous news and he wishes me Many Happy Returns of The Day!! I tell him how simply WONDERFUL he's looking, and insist ("there's nothing in the world I'd like more, Your Royal Highness!") on walking with him. He is understandably overjoyed, but pretends he'd rather walk alone. Poor fellow – no-one likes to be outshone!! Onwards and onwards!!

As told to

CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER


HOUSES IN TUSCANY AND THE CARIBBEAN
AND APARTMENTS IN
LONDON AND L.A....
EWS
SO BLOODY WHAT?! I DON'T KNOW WHY I GET ALL THIS CRITICISM ABOUT MY PROPERTIES FROM SOME JOURNALISTS..
SILLY SNIPING... JUST IGNORE IT, SIR...
I MEAN, WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? LIVE IN A CAVE SOMEWHERE? IT'S RIDICULOUS...
TOTALLY RIDICULOUS...
YOUR CAVE IN BORDEAUX IS FOR STORING YOUR WINE...

Literary Review

Slight entertainment

Ooh! What a Lovely Pair: Our Story
Ant & Dec
(Michael Joseph, £20)

NOT only have Ant and Dec signed an exclusive two-year-deal with ITV worth £10m each, but theirs is currently the best-selling hardback in Britain. "They're lucky boys, aren't they?" said Sarah Kennedy recently on Radio 2. Well, exactly.

If there's one preconception about Sir Anthony McPartlin and Sir Declan Donnelly, as they will surely be in 30 years' time, it's that they are exceptionally fortunate young men. Without exhibiting any obvious signs of talent, the Geordie munchkins have become Britain's most popular light entertainment presenters, a double act so defined as such in the nation's consciousness that still, after all these years, no one can remember which one is which. It might help here to say that Ant is the one with the beetlebrows and the big forehead, whereas Dec (who looks more like an Ant) is smaller and has more teeth than a dolphin. But you will surely forget again before the end of this piece, or even sentence.

As in life, so in autobiography. In *Ooh! What A Lovely Pair* (a title that fairly reeks of old showbiz) Ant appears in italics and Dec in bold. The ghost, Andrew Milligan (prominently acknowledged, as ghosts should be but rarely are), presents them as a sort of bantering double act, constantly interrupting each other like an old married couple. We learn, inter alia, that Dec is terrified of birds, once thought of becoming a priest and can't cook for toffee, while Ant is incredibly clumsy and a "grumpy bugger" who likes practical jokes.

"When we were kids, the summers seemed longer," writes Dec, aged 86. "There was always a game of British Bulldog or Headers and Volleys going on." "Like Dec, I've got really fond memories of my childhood," says Ant. "Everything seemed so simple and happy." Aw shucks. "I think the way we got into *Byker Grove* [their first success on TV] also tells you something about our different personalities. I know what you're thinking, but don't worry, we're not about to get all deep and psychological." Funnily enough I wasn't worrying much about that at all.

As with Jonathan Ross's awful, lazy book of last year, you often feel that you're being addressed less as an individual reader than as a member of a studio audience. (Ant even adds a jokey "readers" to the end of a few sentences, in a possibly unconscious echo of *The Beano*.) But there's none of the hubris that blighted Ross's book (and, indeed, career). Ant and Dec miss no opportunity to take the mickey of themselves and each other, and cheerfully recount all their gravest professional humiliations. As on TV they will do anything for a laugh, and if the jokes aren't funny, never mind, there'll be another one along in a minute. "Pardon the pun," says Ant more than twice, as your gums start to bleed.

Like so many celeb memoirs, this one gets duller as it goes on. The more famous and successful they become, the less they have to say – but that doesn't stop them saying it.

"Although we didn't know it yet, 2002 would be a year unlike any other." Their book is rambling, repetitive and far too long, but it confirms several things you might have long suspected: that excessive talent can be a burden both professionally and personally, while a reliance on mild amiability, allied to quick minds and an unfailing willingness to smile for the camera –any camera – can make your fortune. In short, Ant and Dec know their limitations. More importantly, they know that we know them too, and that it doesn't matter. Lucky boys for sure.

Bee minus

Generation A
Douglas Coupland
(Heinemann, £16.99)

DESPITE the similarity of title, this is not so much a sequel to Douglas Coupland's first and most famous novel, Generation X, as a vain attempt to recapture that earlier book's success in identifying the spirit of the age by depicting a selection of representative individuals. Or to put it another way, "Five characters in search of a zeitgeist."

Generation A is set in the near future when the common honey bee or *Apis Mellifera* has become extinct. Without bees to pollinate them, flowering plants cannot replicate and man's food needs have to be met by genetically modified crops. But suddenly five individuals around the world are stung by bees. Where did they these recusant buzzers come from? Why did they pick on these five individuals? And does their involvement make this an "apistolary" novel? (*Ha ha.*)

None of the five characters is particularly attractive. First there's Zack, a corn farmer in Iowa. His corn is of the bland, genetically modified, high fructose variety. A typical cob, he tells us, is like "a bloated, foot-long, buttery carb dildo". Zack gets stung in the cab of his combine while cutting out a crop-circle in the shape of a giant cock and balls. He's naked at the time and being filmed on a webcam, so the incident makes him an instant video celebrity. (The word "cornography" springs to mind.)

Another of the bee-sting victims is Diana, a conservative Christian loner who looks for soulmates on a religious bulletin board while harbouring a secret pash for the local pastor. To make her slightly more interesting, she also suffers from Tourette's syndrome, which gives Coupland the chance to scatter expressions like "Fuckshitpisscunt" in the text. Diana being a dental hygienist, the expression "wash out your mouth" springs to mind.

Then there's Harj, the token third-worlder among the five. He's from Sri Lanka, where his entire family was wiped out in the 2004 tsunami. His way of coping with this disaster is to throw himself with inappropriate enthusiasm into his work as a call centre clerk for Abercrombie & Fitch.

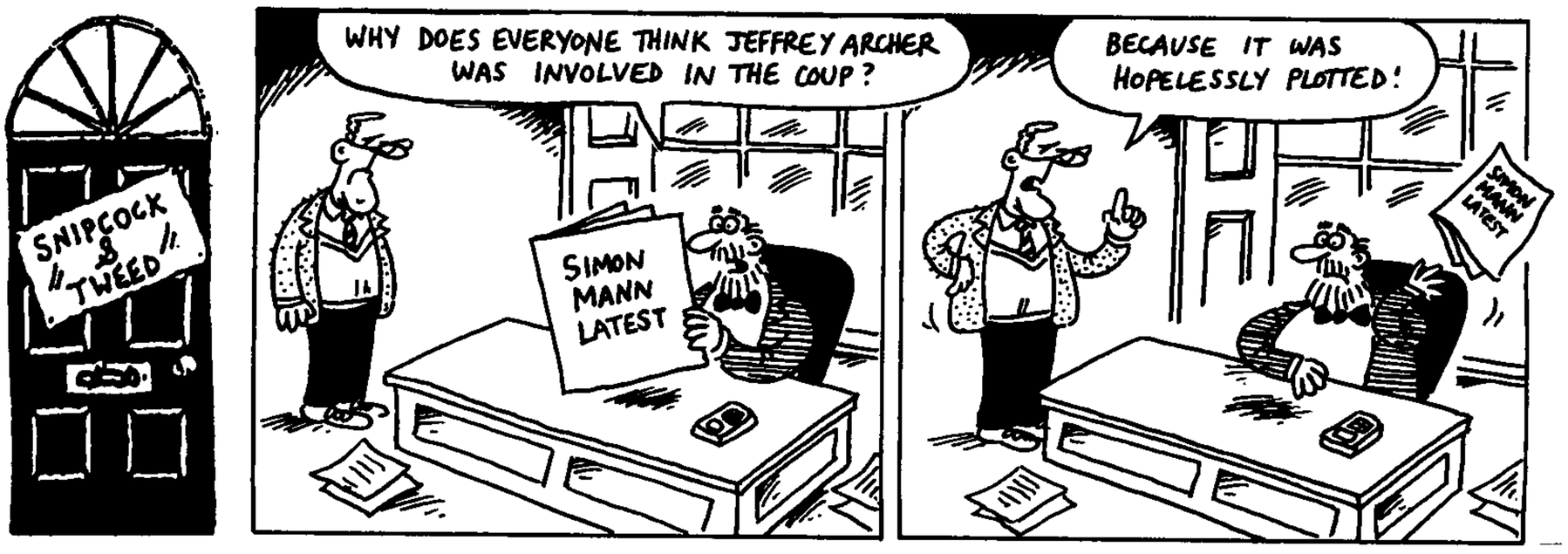
Julien, the fourth bee-stingee, is the token non-Anglophone, being French. He's a sci-fi anorak and college dropout with a Houellebecq-like distaste for modern pieties.

The last of the five is Samantha. She lives in New Zealand, makes "earth sandwiches" and misses the apples which you can no longer find, except for a few hand-pollinated specimens. An earth sandwich involves one person putting a piece of bread on the ground in one part of the world and another person, linked by video, putting down the other piece of bread on the opposite side of the planet. It's a cute little metaphor for globalisation but although it seems a typical Douglas Coupland conceit, it may not be. Someone called Ze Frank, an online performance artist and blogger, apparently claims it was his idea and Coupland merely copied it. But since the whole story appears on Wikipedia, it is hard to know how seriously to take it.

Each of the five, having been stung, is descended upon by haz-mat teams, and taken away to a remote laboratory to be subjected to physiological and psychological testing. Then they are returned to normal life, to experience the effects of global celebrity, before being taken away again, to a remote island, where a mysterious scientist called Serge gets them all to recount a series of stories, like the *Canterbury Tales*, in the course of which is revealed some sort of explanation for the disappearance of the bees. It's all mixed up with a drug called Solon (shades of Huxley's soma) which cures people of their "fear of the future".

Though the plot sounds rather pointless, that is hardly the, er, point. It could be Coupland's offering in the literary post-disaster future-schlock dystopia stakes, à la Margaret Atwood, Iain Banks et al (see *Eye* 1247). The dearth of bees has been the subject of a recent film, so as potential eco-disasters go, it's certainly topical. But then again, like all Coupland's novels, it could be just window-dressing for his latest report from the cutting edge of the zeitgeist, served up with his usual obsession with brand names, logos and trade marks.

Is he satirising or celebrating our post-modern alienation? Is it bleak, or just oblique? It's hard to tell. Though his style is distinctive, his books are much of a muchness. With titles like *Generation X*, *Generation A* and *J-Pod*, you feel he may just be working his way through the alphabet. A for generation, B for bees, C for Coupland, etc. By the time you get to Z, you wonder what the fuss was all about. Z is for zeitgeist, of course, but it is also just for zzzzz...


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
WHY DOES EVERYONE THINK JEFFREY ARCHER WAS INVOLVED IN THE COUP?
SIMON MANN LATEST
BECAUSE IT WAS HOPELESSLY PLOTTED!
SIMON MANN LATEST

ST DIANA OF ATHILL

■ THE first moves towards the beatification of Saint Diana of Athill came in January 2008's award of the Costa Prize for her memoir *Somewhere Towards the End*.

Another gargantuan step was taken with the *Guardian*'s recent publication of a hagiographical profile by Ian Jack occupying two-and-a-half pages of the paper's *Saturday Review*.

Written to accompany a jumbo-sized re-packaging of this sprightly nonagenarian's *oeuvre, Life Class: The Memoirs of Diana Athill* (Granta £25), Jack – coincidentally Athill's editor for her last three books – laid it on with a trowel: "In different hands the book could have been filled with a sentimental longing for the past, brittle cheer towards the present, or the religious consolation of the future," he declared of *Somewhere Towards the End*. Instead, we get "a beautifully turned series of episodes, none of them sermonic... good sense, candour and lively spirit". There was also a lot about the "pragmatic code of personal behaviour" by which Athill's reviewers are constantly enthused.

Neutral readers, on the other hand, may wonder whether a "pragmatic code of personal behaviour" isn't merely short-hand for the suppression of one or two basic human instincts. The curious thing about practically all of Athill's work is its well-nigh glacial detachment.

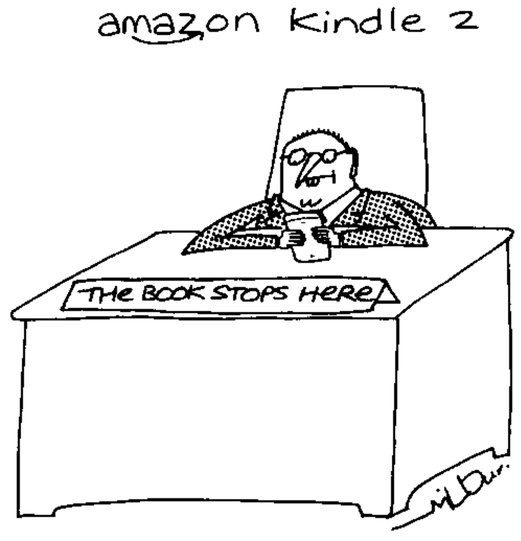
Is this simply the stiff-upper-lip principle of her childhood carried on to the point of hypertrophy? No doubt about it, *Somewhere Towards the End*, *Stet* and the others are fascinating books, but their fascination lies in what is left out, or squashed beyond recognition, rather than what remains.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ AT THE recent party celebrating the 30th birthday of the *London Review of Books*, some of the more senior dons present must have wondered if they were experiencing a champagne-induced flash-back to the late 60s as Tariq Ali clambered on to a table.

Very much on his own initiative – no speeches were planned – the former firebrand created a moment of delicious embarrassment by paying tribute not just to Mary-Kay Wilmers, the cerebral fortnightly's editor and paymistress (though he rather pointedly called her "eccentric"), but also to the "regrettably absent" founding editor, Karl Miller, who has not spoken to Wilmers since departing in high dudgeon. Reluctant guests were persuaded to toast both editors, a feat not unlike eliciting three cheers for Edward Heath as well as Margaret Thatcher at an 80s Tory conference.

If Miller's name could only be whispered at the party, so too could the issue of the *LRB* succession once Wilmers, 71, retires. Her long-standing deputy, Jean McNicol, is thought to have been miffed by the bald assertion by John Sutherland in the *FT* that the famously frosty incumbent had "no obvious heir". But rumour suggests she would indeed be passed over if Andrew O'Hagan or John Lanchester, both regular contributors, agreed to be crowned. Neither, though, is likely to want to be as full-time and hands-on as Wilmers.



■ AS THE *Eye* noted at the time (issue 1179), spy writer Ben Macintyre's 2007 biography of the double agent Eddie Chapman, *Agent Zigzag*, received rave reviews and did well.

But it could have done even better had it not been pre-empted by a rival biographer who made use of papers that had been released by MI5 at Macintyre's instigation and sneakily produced a cheaper book a fortnight earlier than Macintyre.

This time around wily Ben is taking no chances. All he will say about his next book, to be published by Bloomsbury in January, is that it is "another true World War Two story of espionage, plots and extraordinary characters". Anything more is being withheld until "closer to publication".

He seems to have learnt that careless talk costs lives – or sales anyway.

■ AS PUBLIC libraries abandon books in favour of more computers, coffee shops and performance spaces (see *Eyes passim*), at least bookshops will remain primarily devoted to books, surely?

Not judging by the vision of Philip Downer, CEO and, following a management buyout this summer, part-owner of the Borders chain. "The new Borders is going to have a greater variety of other product in it," he told the *Bookseller* last month. "Borders is going to evolve more in terms of being a merchandising space, with a more clearly delineated and bigger children's offer, for instance, and different, additional merchandising supporting books and the other products. I can also guarantee that a significant portion of our income will come from something we haven't yet identified."

'Bookworm'

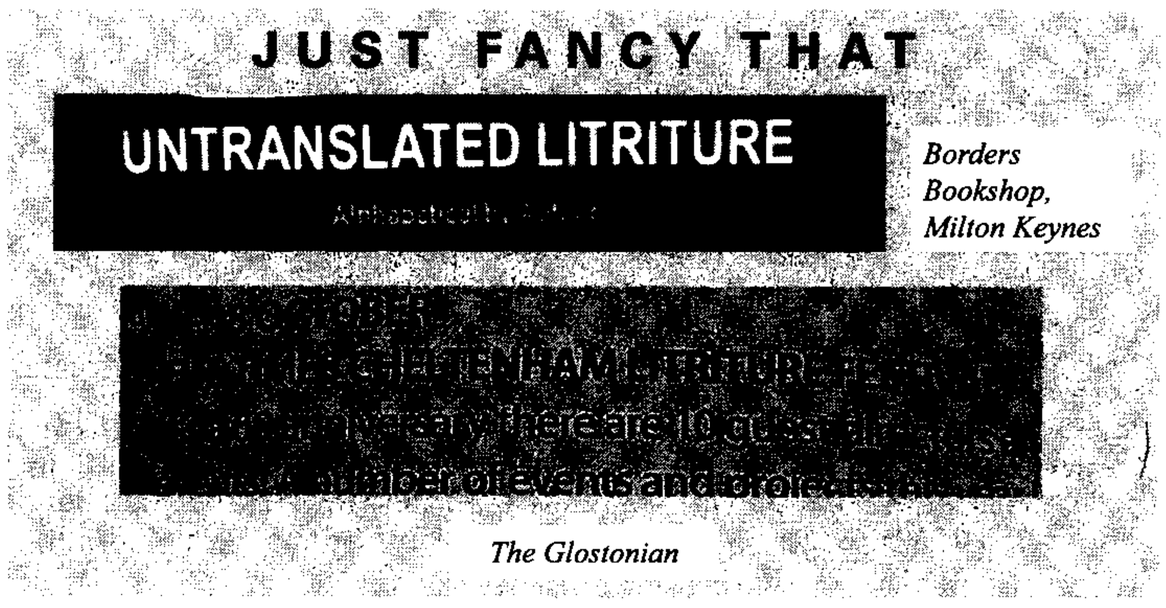
LIBRARY NEWS

■ THE Nottingham school that halved its library, then dismissed its librarian while she was off sick (*Eye* 1235) now faces a large legal bill.

Jacqueline Crockford is still waiting for an employment tribunal to decide whether she was unfairly dismissed, but in the meantime a pre-hearing review ruled against West Bridgford School's attempt to claim that she was not disabled and ordered the school to pay costs. The school had challenged the report of a jointly instructed medical expert.

Ms Crockford's case, along with the closure of several other school libraries, has prompted a campaign for school libraries, run by properly qualified staff, to be made statutory in the whole country, as they are in Scotland.

JUST FANCY THAT



Borders Bookshop, Milton Keynes

The Glostonian

A cultural black box awaits space travellers picking their way across the post-apocalyptic English landscape. In it, before they get to Darwin, Elgar, Shakespeare, Newton, Cromwell, Chaucer or Morrissey, they will find a red button to press. It releases the caged voice of Ian Robertson fulminating over the drop-kick executed by Jonny Wilkinson that secured the Webb Ellis Trophy for England in Sydney 2003.

At that moment two millennia of Englishness seemed to distil into this singular sporting hero. In his impossible, blue-eyed blondness he bottled all that we are and could ever be; he soared above the ordinary, he set forth across a stellar plane, an Englishman for all time...

KEVIN GARSIDE,
Daily Telegraph

Pseuds Corner

Feet**treat** have been cushioning the feet of Soho locals since we first began trading on Berwick Street in 1998. Inspired by our bohemian surroundings and the diversity of this eclectic community we've created our own tribute to the neighbourhood... The Soho Collection.

Packaging from a pack of plain black socks, manufactured in Turkey

We are counterfeiting and bootlegging, but it's a little more complex than that. It's about translation and mistranslation. The objects that we're making are objects in their own right, made by an artist in their own right, so the resulting works of art have a kind of dual lineage from the original artist and the remaker.

STEPHANIE SYJUCO on her cheap reproductions of existing art-works,
Guardian

Pseuds Corporate

...to become The Integrated Workplace Specialist for progressive organisations by delivering integrated workplace asset solutions that define new benchmarks for workplace efficiency.

'The BGM Group Vision', company website

CONTRIBUTORS: Polly Fallows, A. Banham, Martin Pollard, David Snell.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

NIMROD CRASH

All MoD cons

CHARLES Haddon-Cave QC's report into the crash of the Nimrod XV230 which caught fire in the skies over Afghanistan in September 2006 killing 14 service personnel was rightly reported as a devastating indictment of the Ministry of Defence, its contractor BAE Systems and privatised technology firm QinetiQ. But it also laid bare a decade-long failure of government by initiative, management consultancy and outsourcing.

The failure dated back to the 1998 strategic defence review launched by the then defence secretary George Robertson which, said Haddon-Cave, "unleashed a veritable 'tsunami' of cuts and change within the MoD which was to last for years". The "'savings', 'efficiencies', 'strategic targets', 'reduction in output costs', 'leaning', etc" coincided with "a cascade of multifarious organisational changes (called variously 'change initiatives', 'transformation', 're-energising', etc.) which led to a dilution of the airworthiness regime and culture within the MoD and distraction from safety and airworthiness issues".

Behind all this gobbledygook was the management consultancy McKinsey, which earned £70m from the MoD between 2000 and 2007 inventing systems like "smart procurement", which turned out to be deadly, and "re-energising the defence logistics organisation", leading to 20 percent cuts.

Despite the depth of its involvement, warranting 51 mentions in the report, McKinsey escaped criticism, in the belief that senior defence officials ought to have spoken out against the obvious consequences of McKinsey's recommendations for safety. But defence chiefs were not only patsies of a government bent on change and cuts at the same time as expanding military commitments – they listened to management consultants to the exclusion of those who really knew what was going on. Last year *Eye* 1202 reported how officials complained that "McKinsey invested much effort and cost in engaging constantly with MoD senior management. It was apparent that they were able to gain access to senior decision-makers far easier than 'middle managers/service officers' in the MoD".

Among McKinsey's concoctions was the "integrated project team" (IPT) system that now controls all major defence programmes and which in the case of the "lamentable" Nimrod IPT led to the relationship between MoD and BAE officials

becoming "too cosy". Those responsible for safety and keeping tabs on BAE had a misplaced incentive to get the job signed off, with catastrophic consequences.

This arrangement was supposed to have been monitored by privatised defence research agency QinetiQ, whose bosses were pre-occupied with the more important business of vastly enriching themselves through a privatisation process running from 2001 to 2006, which saw chairman Sir John Chisholm trouser £20m and chief executive Graham Love (who departed days after the Nimrod report) benefit only marginally less. While Haddon-Cave didn't make the link, it seems unlikely that the profit motivation in the boardroom was unrelated to QinetiQ's "fundamentally lax and compliant" (but profitable) approach that saw it sign off BAE's work "when it was manifestly inappropriate to do so".

While MoD, BAE and QinetiQ officials were all criticised by Haddon-Cave, those ultimately responsible were not. The defence secretary from 1999 to 2005 who pushed through the cuts and changes that caused the disaster, Geoff "Buff" Hoon, has escaped any censure. So too has the man who as chancellor forced through a wrong-headed efficiency programme that heaped cuts upon cuts (while backing more wars), Gordon Brown. And then there's the prime minister who created the culture for "cosy" relationships, calling on "the civil service to be more entrepreneurial, to be more adventurous like their private sector counterparts", "to loosen up" and use "rules as a means to an end, not as an end in themselves". Step forward, T. Blair.

PS: Although the report discredits McKinsey's "integrated project team" model, it remains the method of choice for the MoD. Among the largest projects is the £12bn privatisation of defence training, the IPT which has brooked no criticism from its detractors in the military. The PFI deal will soon see training run by a consortium, Metrix, controlled by the "lax and compliant" QinetiQ.

■ Criticism of the episode from the Conservatives made no mention of QinetiQ, perhaps because their shadow security minister, Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, was chairman of the firm from 2002 to 2005 and made hundreds of thousands of pounds from its privatisation.

FAMILY COURTS

Cafcass about face

WHILE the government spends millions of pounds and hours trying to put every child in the country on a database and introducing clumsy checks on any adult who visits a school or gives a lift to a sports team, children who are genuinely at risk of abuse or neglect are being cruelly short-changed by Cafcass, the body that is meant to represent them in care and custody cases.

The Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service is in meltdown, forced into special measures and providing only what it calls a "safe minimum" service as it deals with a backlog of 900 cases where children have no one to look after their interests.

As a result children will no longer have a dedicated guardian to look after their best interests, but be allocated to a Cafcass "team" – something most local authority social service departments recognised was a bad idea a long time ago.

Cafcass chief Anthony Douglas has claimed his service's troubles stem from the huge rise in care and custody cases following the Baby P tragedy.

But that is only part of the picture.

Cafcass, like the troubled National Offender Management Service (Noms), has become a managerial and "back room" bureaucracy. Its human resources department has expanded to one member of staff for every 57 frontline workers and its IT department has quadrupled in recent months.

Like Noms, it also introduced an additional layer of "corporate directors" on £100,000-plus each, only to find that this duplicated the work of another tier of directors who are having to be paid off. The *Eye* has already catalogued the exodus of experienced guardians and children's solicitors who did the work before Cafcass was invented for a fraction of the cost.

As if this were not bad enough, vulnerable children face a double-whammy as the government also imposes big cuts in legal aid on the family courts. Judges and critics in the Lords have predicted that this will leave families, and in particular children, at risk of poor or inadequate representation that could have disastrous consequences. So much for "putting children first".

LOCKERBIE

Late review

THE police "review" of the Lockerbie case appears to be little more than a sop to head off demands for a full public inquiry.

Any meaningful reinvestigation would involve another force being brought in to carry out the review – not an officer involved in the original investigation into the bombing of Pan Am 103. It would also surely include a thorough review of the evidence upon which the independent Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC) decided that Ali Mohmed al-Megrahi may have been the victim of a miscarriage of justice (see *Eyes passim*). But that is not to be.

Another new key area of concern is the forensic evidence underpinning the entire case: notably a small fragment of a circuit board for a bomb timer found in and among fragments of a man's shirt recovered from the site. The shirt and other clothing recovered were said to have been traced back to Tony Gauci, the Maltese shopkeeper who said he had sold them to a man who resembled Megrahi.

The prosecution has always claimed that these tiny fragments were identified by Dr Thomas Hayes at the Royal Armament Research and Development Establishment (Rarde) on 12 May 1989. There was concern at the time of the trial that the label on this crucial piece of evidence had been altered. Further, the pages in Hayes' notes relating to this evidence had been curiously renumbered. *Eye* readers may recall that the work of Hayes and other Rarde scientists has subsequently been criticised in a series of high-profile miscarriage-of-justice cases involving IRA terrorism – in particular the inquiry by Sir John May into the wrongful conviction of the Maguire family, where scientific notebooks had been found to have been altered.

Lawyers for Megrahi have now uncovered a similar pattern of inconsistencies, alterations, discrepancies and undisclosed material that again calls into question the integrity of the Rarde scientists. It comes from new scientific tests as well as a meticulous examination of evidence that was not disclosed or available at the time. Here are some examples…

- Photographs and evidence suggest that the circuit board and debris from the shirt had not been discovered until January 1990 – seven months later than Rarde claimed.
- Further evidence that scientific notes had been altered.
- Details of simulated explosions carried out in the US in July 1989 were not revealed, but debris from those blasts were taken both to Rarde and to Lockerbie for comparison.
- Exhibit labels were being written and attached by police more than a year after the debris was found.
- One man who was asked to put his name to the discovery of pieces of the charred shirt says he does not recall recovering the material. He also says the cloth shown to him by police was not the same grey colour as that identified in court as the shirt bought by Megrahi.
- Evidence to suggest the charred "bomb" shirt was in fact a child's shirt.
- A wealth of conflicting evidence surrounding the discovery of charred pieces of a Babygro – also said to have been packed in the bomb suitcase and sold to Megrahi. One Babygro collected by investigators for comparison purposes was not accounted for.

The SCCRC, which had some but not all of this material, rejected suggestions that the evidence had been deliberately fabricated. But it fell short of conducting its own forensic tests.

If this is a cock-up or incompetence, it is on such a scale that it recalls the verdict of Sir John May in the Maguire inquiry that the scientific basis on which the prosecution was founded should not be relied upon. Taken with Gauci's highly dubious identification evidence (*Eyes passim*), the case for a public inquiry remains overwhelming.

WATER PRIVATISATION

20 years of, er, shit

SIX water companies are demanding the right to carry on polluting rivers thanks to a legal loophole that was deliberately created to ensure that water could be privatised in the 1980s.

The Environment Agency grants consents that allow water companies, subject to strict conditions, to discharge storm sewage into waterways after heavy rain or snowfall. However, in the 1980s thousands of inadequate storm sewage outlets were granted supposedly temporary "deemed consents" to carry on pouring out overflow sewage with no conditions attached. This allowed the government to privatise the water industry without landing the new water companies with immediate criminal liabilities for pollution.

The minister responsible, Michael Howard, told parliament in 1989 that deemed consents would allow water firms to "begin their lives on the basis of good order and proper regulation".

Although many overflow outlets have since been rebuilt, freedom of information requests made last year by the Angling Trust's legal arm, Fish Legal, revealed that more than 3,000 still operate under their 20-year-old deemed consents. Surely that was just a legal hangover and the companies have tackled the problems over the last two decades? Not judging by their response to the Environment Agency's announcement that all consents would now be subject to conditions – such as maintaining alarm systems and not causing river quality to deteriorate.

Thames Water, Yorkshire Water, United Utilities, Welsh Water, Anglian Water and Severn Trent (which was fined £10,000 in September after a sewage works overflowed into the Trent) have lodged appeals. Their cases will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate before the end of the year. In the meantime their licence to pollute continues.

In a recent letter to Environment Secretary Hilary Benn, Fish Legal said water companies had escaped punishment for serious pollution incidents because "the usual enforcement action by the Environment Agency has not been possible, as there have been no effective conditions against which to enforce... these temporary consents have cloaked from proper regulatory control, what would normally be unlawful polluting sewage discharges."

Water industry lobbying body Water UK has accused the EA of being "hasty" in imposing new the arrangements. If 20 years is hasty, how long does sluggish take?

GOBBLEDEGOOK

Stupid letter of the week

British Airways' struggles with the English language continue. Hard on the heels of winning stupid letter of the week in *Eye 1247*, comes their response to Eye reader Diana Hembry, who complained about a recent flight.

"I have reviewed all the circumstances again and taken account of your letter," wrote BA customer relations. "I am therefore afraid that no commercial gesture was done for this kind of situation." Whatever do they mean?

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

A stab in the dark

FOUR years after *Private Eye* first highlighted the dubious conviction of Simon Hall (pictured) for the murder six years ago of 79-year-old Joan Albert, the criminal cases review commission (CCRC) has finally referred his case back to the appeal court.

The commission says it has new scientific evidence that casts doubt on the only forensic evidence that was said to have linked Hall, now aged 31, to the fatal stabbing – fibres found at the scene.

In fact there is another crucial piece of evidence which points to Hall's innocence. It had been buried in a mass of unused material, handed over to Hall's then defence team just days before his trial, and it has recently been unearthed by law students working on Bristol University "Innocence Project".

The students found a statement from a care worker who looked after an elderly man living 10 minutes away from Mrs Albert in Capel St Mary and who was also the victim of a burglary on the night Mrs Albert was stabbed. The care worker reported that immediately after the burglary she noticed that two kitchen knives she regularly used to prepare the man's meals had gone missing. Later, when shown a picture of the murder weapon, she identified it as "similar to the one stolen. It appears to have the same colour handle and length of blade. It also has the same rivets on the handle."

The students also found a "schedule of unused material" which showed that DNA was recovered from the knife from "more than one person" but "the results are believed to be of no practical use". Could this be because, just like the fingerprints found above Mrs Albert's body, footprints found in the garden and DNA on her body, it didn't match Hall's?

If it is established that the murder weapon was, as the care worker believed, stolen during the other house raid, it proves Hall could not possibly have been the killer. His current solicitor, Campbell Malone, praised the work of the Innocence Project in helping to get Hall's case back before the appeal court. "This case highlights, once again, the dangers of relying solely on scientific evidence to underpin a conviction," he said.

Eye readers will recall that Hall was only put in the frame because his mother used to care for Mrs Albert and had a key to her house. He had a firm alibi for all but about half an hour on the night Mrs Albert was killed. He was pubbing and clubbing with friends in Ipswich, dropping one off at his house between 5.30 and 6am, before arriving home to his mother, Lynne, at round 6.15am. As it was, it was unlikely he could have broken in to Mrs Albert's home, killed her and arrived back home. But there was absolutely no way he could have burgled one old person's home and then moved on to Mrs Albert's.

Other evidence has been "buried" in this troubling case too. According to the prosecution's own expert, whose statement was spotted by the defence at the time, it was likely that Mrs Albert was long dead by the time Hall had dropped his friend off. Dr Payne-James, a gastro-enterologist, said her stomach contents suggested she must have eaten only about three hours before death. If, as evidence suggested, her usual habit was to eat a midnight snack, the time of death would have been around 3am or earlier – when Hall was partying in Ipswich.

That time of death fitted neatly too with the evidence of two sets of neighbours who reported being woken by a commotion at about 2am. The murderer had scaled two fences and broken a window to gain access to Mrs Albert's house.

Then there were other serious anomalies in the case. Simon Hall is well over six feet tall and well built, yet was supposed to have entered and left Mrs Albert's house through a 14-inch wide broken window without suffering cuts to himself or clothing, or getting glass on him. His mother noticed nothing amiss when he arrived home. In any event she had a key to Mrs Albert's house, which would have made a risky break-in unnecessary.

The prosecution claimed that when confronted, Hall stabbed Mrs Albert in panic and rushed out. But it is clear that Mrs Albert suffered stab wounds to the area of her breast and groin which were inflicted after death. This suggested that the perpetrator also had a sexual motive and remained at the scene for some time.

Thus the only evidence which persuaded the jury at Norwich crown court to convict Hall – by a majority verdict of 11-1 – were the dodgy fibres, known about for at least two years but upon which the CCRC has now finally agreed to send the case back. In the meantime Simon Hall remains in jail, separated from his wife and family while the real killer appears to remain at large.

NUCLEAR EXPANSION

HSE spells trouble

ENERGY secretary Ed Miliband seems more determined than ever to push through a raft of new nuclear power stations – even though the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has, like its US equivalent, now raised serious concerns about the Westinghouse AP1000 nuclear reactor (see last *Eye*).

The AP1000 is supposedly one of the two destined to fuel Britain's nuclear renaissance. The HSE's questions about the reactor, which come after the American Nuclear Regulatory Commission said the design was not secure enough, are raised in the HSE's latest "Generic Design Assessment (GDA)" progress report. In order to speed things up, the HSE and Environment Agency are trying to approve "generic" designs for two reactors in advance so power companies can start building them without having to get each power station approved individually. But parts of the report, spotted by *Building* magazine, show that Westinghouse is not helping.

The HSE flashed up various "red indicators", including inspectors' worries about Westinghouse's approach to civil engineering, saying: "Progress remains slow in providing adequate responses to our questions on design codes and standards. We have not seen evidence that the civil structure design conforms to the kind of design standards we would expect to be applied to new nuclear construction."

The inspectors wanted details of new pressure valves but "to date, Westinghouse have shown little progress in addressing our concerns, and we consider that there is a significant risk that Westinghouse have underestimated the depth of the issue and the resources and effort that are needed."

The inspectors also wanted details of how the AP1000 would stand up to "external hazards" such as floods, extreme weather or plane crashes, as well as information on "human factors" that might cause safety problems. The promised detail is yet to materialise.

A company spokesman told *Private Eye*: "Westinghouse recognises each of these areas as important to the successful GDA licensing action and has committed resources to the timely resolution of these issues."

The AP1000 is likely to be the choice reactor for RWE/Eon for their proposed UK nuclear stations. EDF has chosen Areva's EPR reactor, which has its own construction problems in France and Finland. The HSE also has worries about the EPR.

The fact that both reactors planned for Britain are in technical difficulty means costs are likely to rise, making the need for a government subsidy ever stronger.

BUMPER BONUSES

Keeping up their Actis

LAST year was pretty shocking for the world's financiers: even London's bankers saw their bonuses drop by 60 percent in 2008. But one group trousered record bonuses even though their performance compared unfavourably with any dismal banker.

Who were they? Unsurprisingly, they were the bosses at privatised international development fund manager Actis.

Actis's 2008 accounts, just filed, reveal record profits of $32.5m profits, up from $11m in 2007, largely from managing half of the investments owned by the publicly-owned development fund from which it was spun out in 2004, CDC (formerly the Commonwealth Development Corporation).

The profits, to be shared among the firm's 25 partners at an average $1.3m each, can be explained by a 35 percent hike in income from CDC, ie the taxpayer, from $87m to $118m. Of this, $63m came in the form of "incentive fees", up by 18 percent on 2007. The remaining $55m came from management fees, up from £42m in 2007 (a 31 percent hike) even though the value of CDC investments managed by Actis fell from £788m to £453m (43 percent) from 2007 to 2008.

These riches were paid by the taxpayer to the fund managers despite dire financial results for CDC's investments, the return on which was, ahem, a loss of £359m, or more than 30 percent.

Biggest haul went to Actis senior partner Paul Fletcher, the man who, as chief executive of CDC in 2004 sold Actis, to, er, himself and a few colleagues for £373,000. In 2008 he trousered at least $2.3m, or around £1.5m (as CDC boss six years ago he was on about a sixth of that). The firm's 241 staff shared $95m, an average (including the lowest paid) of $390,000 each, after $250,000 cash bonuses; enough to make many a banker envious.

Defending the payments, an Actis spokeswoman said: "Actis must incentivise individuals in line with the rest of the private equity industry. These markets are competitive and a private equity skill set is in short supply." An interesting approach to poverty relief.

TAX DODGING

Hodkinson's disease

CHRISTIAN AID stepped up its campaign against tax dodging last week with a report on the "world's most secretive tax havens" responsible for "money laundering, tax evasion and avoidance, insider trading, terrorist financing, embezzlement, Ponzi schemes...and much more". Among the offending offshore centres were the British havens of Jersey, the Isle of Man and Guernsey.

All of which is awkward for Christian Aid trustee and HM Revenue and Customs director Phil Hodkinson (pictured), who occasionally breaks off fighting the good fight to earn £100,000 a year as a director of Resolution Ltd, the vulture operation that mops up beleaguered insurance companies (it's just bought Friends Provident) and is registered for tax purposes in... Guernsey!

Hodkinson's job is to hop over to the island for meetings with other directors, securing the Guernsey tax status, while back on the mainland the real movers behind Resolution – Clive Cowdery and former Financial Services Authority boss John Tiner – run the operation through a contrived set-up called "Resolution Operations LLP".

The idea is that when Resolution Ltd profitably sells on the companies it has snaffled up, tax will be avoided on the profit. Nobody will know exactly what happens to this money as it will be carved up through companies and partnerships in Guernsey and Luxembourg taking advantage of, er, financial secrecy.

Not that the ruse is guaranteed to work. Last month HMRC boss Dave Hartnett told the *FT* he was planning "investigation and litigation" against companies claiming offshore tax residence while operating in the UK. Tax specialists agree that if any such set-up is crying out for a close look it is Resolution's. A seat in the HMRC boardroom could be handy should the threat materialise.

When the *Eye* mentioned Hodkinson's offshore connections a few weeks ago (*Eye* 1245), such was the concern at Christian Aid that an "independent" review was commissioned for new chairwoman Anne Owers. From this it was concluded that concerns over "potential inconsistencies" between Hodkinson's roles were "outweighed by Phil's almost unique combination of attributes – not only his great experience, expertise and contacts in finance [he was finance director of HBOS until 2007 as it hurtled towards oblivion] but also his experience at HMRC as a non-executive member of the board" – an unlikely triumph for Mammon indeed. But the arch critics of financial secrecy refused to release either the "independent" report or the name of its author, who doubtless has no interest in giving tax havens a stamp of respectability.

PS: Hodkinson still chairs HMRC's "ethics and responsibilities" committee despite an outspoken attack last month on tax avoidance as "unacceptable" by the minister in charge of the department, Stephen Timms (see last *Eye*). And he has recently become a trustee of Children in Need, whose annual £30-40m fundraising for good causes is dwarfed by the tax Resolution is expected to avoid.

PPS: The largest shareholder in Resolution Ltd is Lloyds Banking Group, which is itself half-owned by the tax*payer*.

ACCOUNTANCY

Deloitte fingered... again

MORE on Britain's big accountancy firms and their unattractive habits: grinding troubled businesses into the dust.

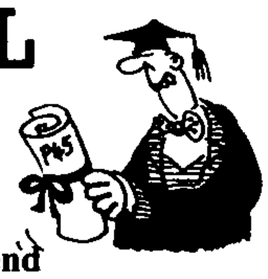
This can be a slow process but, for the bean-counters, very profitable. More than three years ago *Eye* 1157 reported the story of West Midlands steel manufacturer David Fabb, whose group of companies were brought down by a dubious report on their financial position, precipitating an administration process from which more than £3.5m has been earned by Deloitte.

Deloitte responded to Fabb's complaints with a series of questionable actions, including a £1m claim on assets belonging to another of his businesses, CKE Engineering, rendering this business insolvent and forcing it into administration with the loss of 100 jobs.

The claim was always fanciful (but had the desirable effect for Deloitte of prolonging the administration and putting off a liquidation process that might call into question its conduct). Now it has been judicially recognised as such. The judge who has finally heard the claim has reduced it to £35,000. This would not have sunk CKE and is in any case disputed by Fabb as based on inaccurate records from Deloitte, who have form in this respect on Fabb's case (see *Eye* 1165). The judge called the claim "very substantial and misconceived". A fair description of Britain's insolvency industry too perhaps?

HIGH PRINCIPALS

Stupid ESOL



COURSES in basic English at Manchester's super college are in disarray after students were "accidentally" allowed to attend courses the college cannot afford to offer.

Last month 300 students who were already a few weeks into their English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes at The Manchester College were given five days' notice that the college was shutting their courses down.

TMC staff were told not to talk about the cock-up; but the *Eye* has seen a letter sent to one refugee student by student services director Betsy Sara. It said the government no longer pays for the lowest entry level courses in many colleges but due to "an unforeseen error", students had been enrolled on classes "which this college has no funding to run".

Manchester's Adult Education Service (MAES) is now having to pay £450,000 from its Working Neighbourhoods fund to cover extra ESOL classes for 300 bewildered students.

The summer saw unrest within TMC's ESOL department after seven experienced staff lost their jobs, including a lecturer's union rep judged to have failed a box-ticking "skills audit" conducted by management. It was an odd outcome given that he'd only recently been commended by Ofsted for the quality of his teaching. The same fate befell University and College Union (UCU) branch secretary Dave Swanson, a maths lecturer with an unblemished 13-year career record and well-regarded by his peers. UCU's battle with TMC managers over union recognition has led to two one-day strikes.

Leeds astray

GOOD to see former vice-chancellor Simon Lee is busy since being ousted from Leeds Metropolitan University earlier this year (*Eyes passim*).

Lee's biography on Wikipedia, the online "encyclopedia", has come over all fawning, citing Lee as a "superstar" academic who is setting up a business "to safeguard the legacy and promote the concept of partnerships" – a piece of mysterious Birtspeak the Wikipedia editors politely queried: "[clarification needed]".

The author of the piece, praising Lee's "disciplined and unstinting hard work", claims to be one of the principals of the Liverpool colleges that merged under Lee to become Liverpool Hope University. Wikipedia editors have tagged the whole article: "The neutrality of this article is disputed". So, it's worth noting that universities watchdog the Quality Assurance Agency recently declared "limited confidence" in Leeds Met following an audit earlier in the year.

Troubled Gloucester

THE arts, media and communication campus of the University of Gloucester, formerly the 150-year-old Cheltenham School of Art, is to close to plug the hole in the young university's finances.

The Pittville Studios, as the campus is now known, will be sold by 2011. Courses will move to other bits of the multiple-campus university, but students are alarmed at the loss of award-winning facilities. Their fears weren't calmed when vice-chancellor Patricia Broadfoot left part-way through a meeting to discuss the plans with students, without a word of explanation.

Only last month the university announced the closure of its teacher training campus, in Poplar, east London – a long way from Gloucestershire. Just seven months before announcing its closure, the university had held a grand reopening for the £8.3m refurbishment of its "London" campus.

You can contact the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017 or email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk

In the City

WITH the bearded wonder Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Money looking for a banking licence, so as perhaps to take the Northern Rock "good bank" off the taxpayers' hands or the forcibly divested parts of RBS and Lloyds, no doubt at a good price for his empire, now seems an unusual if not highly inappropriate moment to promote to prominence one of those most responsible for the collapse of City merchant bank grandees Baring.

But that is exactly what Beardie has done by announcing that from this week the chairman of Virgin Group Holdings, a key parent company in the complex Branson corporate web, will be none other than Peter Norris, former chief executive of Baring Investment Bank and a main board director, who was heavily criticised and banned both from both the City and from being a director for his role in failing to spot and stop rogue trader Nick Leeson (*Eyes passim*). Leeson broke Baring in early 1995 with trading losses of £830m on derivatives incurred at the bank's Singapore operations.

Norris has worked as an adviser to Branson for more than 10 years and was involved in his failed 2007 bid for Northern Rock. Norris was then chief executive of the AIM-listed boutique investment bank Quayle Munro; that year he had sold his corporate finance business to the Edinburgh bank. Norris resigned from his Quayle Munro job last week to become non-executive chairman at Virgin Group Holdings.

"Don't regulate me, you wouldn't like me when I'm regulated"

Norris was criticised by the Bank of England report into the Baring collapse, and even more heavily in the later report of the government of Singapore's inspectors. Both reports were produced during 1995. Leeson was jailed for six and a half years in Singapore in December 1995.

In May 1996 Norris agreed to a three-year ban by the Securities & Futures Authority, predecessor to the Fundamentally Supine Authority, from the investment business. By agreeing to be removed from its register of approved directors he avoided being found "not fit and proper", so he was able to continue to work as a consultant/corporate financier. He agreed to pay £10,000 costs to the SFA.

The SFA stated that Norris "acknowledged that by virtue of his position as chief executive of Baring Investment Bank, he shares responsibility for the circumstances which led to the collapse of Baring". Norris was a member of the bank's asset and liability committee. The SFA said he had "failed to act with due skill, care and diligence" in not making Leeson reduce his trading positions in futures on the Singapore and Osaka stock markets. He had also not acted "with sufficient promptness and firmness" in dealing with a £50m discrepancy in the 1994 accounts of Baring Futures (Singapore) which first revealed Leeson's hidden losses.

Despite this action by the SFA, in 1997 the Department of Timidity & Inaction was stirred into also bringing disqualification proceedings against 10 former Baring directors, including Norris, "in the wider public interest". In March 1998 Norris accepted a four-year disqualification as a director to settle the proceedings. After that ban ended in 2002, he first appeared as a director of a Virgin company.

The DTI accused Norris of failing "to ensure that Leeson's activities were properly monitored or controlled despite his awareness of a number of warning signs. These included the very high and at times extraordinary profits Leeson was making for the bank which were never subject to a detailed examination and Leeson's involvement in both the front and back office". Norris did not dispute these allegations.

These verdicts and Norris's acceptance of them were hardly surprising, given the findings against him made by the regulators here and in Singapore. The July 1995 Bank of England report stated that there had been an "absolute" failure of controls over Baring Futures and Leeson – who was perceived as a key money-maker for fuddy-duddy Baring. Norris it said "must take some responsibility for failing to acquaint himself with the position and to make enquiries as to the precise basis of funding being provided to BFS or as to the reconciliation to underlying records of the sums advanced".

Norris was accused, along with others, of a serious failure to ascertain how Leeson made such profits and of failing to take sufficient steps to ensure there was "proper management control" of his trading. Norris was accused of trying to cover up the £50m discrepancy found in Leeson's books, which the trader had tried to disguise by a phony trade. "The appreciation by certain members of management that there were very unsatisfactory features relating to this transaction is we consider illustrated by the fact that [finance director Geoffrey] Broadhurst (at the request of Norris, who had himself been so requested by [regional manager James] Bax) asked Coopers & Lybrand London that no reference to this transaction be made in the auditors' management letter for BFS. We consider that it was inappropriate for Broadhurst, Norris and Bax to have caused such a request to be made, which was done with a view to attempting to avoid potential problems with the regulators of BFS in Singapore… Norris as chief executive officer must bear ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of the reports to the Bank and… for the accuracy of the returns to the SFA."

In their October 1995 report the Singapore investigators were much tougher, in particular over the £50m hole. "We do not accept Mr Norris's version of the facts… It follows from this that Mr Norris had been untruthful. He knew of the problem… and was at the centre of an effort to: downplay the significance of the transaction raised by the external auditors; discourage all independent investigations into the transaction; ensure that with respect to the other directors who were unaware of it, the matter was conveyed to them in terms that were deceptive and understated; and withhold any action whatsoever against Mr Leeson."

Norris, like Bax, denied these allegations. But the inspectors declared: "We are unable to accept their denials."

The inspectors accused senior executives of being "grossly negligent or wilfully blind and reckless to the truth" in not discovering Leeson's infamous error account "88888", through which he hid his unauthorised and mounting losses from 1992. This was finally spotted by the auditors in January 1995. A month later the bank collapsed.

Norris denied many of the two reports' allegations but ended up with other Baring directors accepting in effect – like the directors of Northern Rock, HBOS and RBS more than a decade later – to not really understanding how profits and bonuses were really made from derivatives.

At the time of the Singapore report Labour's shadow City spokesman, a certain Alistair Darling, stated that it made clear the Baring collapse could not just be blamed on rogue trader Leeson but had identified "serious management failings at Baring". Chancellor Darling has made clear how much he welcomes the prospect of Virgin entering the banking business. Presumably he will be even more impressed now that Norris is heading the group. But then it was all a very, very long time ago.

DEPARTMENT of You Could Not Make This Up. Norris's replacement as chief executive at Quayle Munro is an even more senior member of the guilty Baring bunch, former deputy chairman Andrew Tuckey. Norris brought his former BIB boss Tuckey into Quayle Munro last year from yet another failed bank – Iceland's Landsbanki!

"Nah, just at home... non-ostentatiously celebrating my bonus..."

Unsurprisingly, Tuckey was also criticised in the two Baring reports. In 1998 he was disqualified as a director for four years. Mr Justice Jonathan Parker agreed with the DTI that he had shown "serious failures of management in relation to Leeson's activities, thereby demonstrating incompetence of such a high degree" as to justify disqualification. Tuckey's breach of duty, he said, stemmed from a "fundamental misconception as to the extent of his management responsibility".

In 2000 Tuckey was expelled for four years from the Institute of Chartered Accountants. A disciplinary tribunal held that he "effectively abdicated to others his management responsibility for Baring Futures (Singapore)… This was a step which he was not entitled to take. Mr Tuckey failed to perform (or cause to be performed) any proper or detailed examination of BFS's reported profitability, and failed to ensure that Mr Leeson's activities were properly monitored and/or controlled. He also failed to investigate (or cause to be investigated) promptly and properly the Spear, Leeds & Kellogg receivable and its implications." (The SLK receivable was a fictitious document that purported to show that Baring was entitled to receive £50m from a New York broker.)

Tuckey agreed a settlement with the ICA's regulator, the Joint Disciplinary Scheme, and accepted that his conduct fell below what was expected of a beancounter.

But here he is, back running a bank and a listed company. But then it was all a very, very, very long time ago.

AS WAS the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression, for which bankers were once again rightly in the frame. But just how little has changed or indeed ever changes in the City and regulation is shown by another of the comments of Ferdinand Pecora, chief counsel to the US Senate Banking & Currency Committee's investigation into the causes of the stock market crash.

A former prosecutor, Pecora famously termed the evidence given to the committee as "shocking disclosure of low standards in high places". In 1939 he wrote a book, *Wall Street under Oath*, giving his views on the masters of the universe of another generation. He recalled their initial eagerness to reform in the face of public outrage and government pressure. But then: "The more business recovered, however, and the stronger it felt, the more openly and bitterly did Wall Street oppose any sound program of reform." Ring any bells?

NEW WBA world heavyweight champion David Haye looks set to make many millions from future meetings with rival heavyweight champions, the brothers Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko, as well as lesser opponents such as former champion John Ruiz, following his victory in Germany at the weekend over Nikolai Valuev.

Happily for Haye he may well have legitimately positioned himself so as to legally avoid the worst excesses of Gordon Brown's new 51 percent top income tax/National Insurance rate from next April by moving to Northern Cyprus. Haye now gives his address in company records as Kyrenia, not London. This change took effect from 2 April 2007 – just before the 2007-8 tax

☛ *See over...*

year – although it was not made public in his Hayemaker companies until January this year.

If Haye is now no longer UK-resident that could also mean a big tax saving, including on the £1m he is tipped to receive from the Valuev fight. Promoters are usually required to deduct an agreed amount from any purse paid to a foreign performer as a withholding tax – in the UK this is currently 22 percent. This can then be used as a tax credit against any tax faced in the boxer's country of residence. There are exemptions and exceptions. Usually there is a tax treaty between those two countries, but as nobody recognises Northern Cyprus other than Turkey that could be an issue.

But so long as Haye remains outside the UK for 90 days in each tax year since April 2007, that is what matters when it comes to proving non-residence, along with evidence of a home outside the UK, which he clearly possesses in Northern Cyprus. Haye became world cruiser weight champion in Paris in November 2007.

Tax experts say it is certainly much better to be resident in Turkey, and perhaps Northern Cyprus, when it comes to tax matters. It is even suggested that under Turkish privacy legislation it is forbidden for a civil servant to enquire as to an individual's income or assets. Surely an exaggeration.

Clearly, there has been a change in financial circumstances for the world champion from July last year, when David D Haye Limited was wound by on a creditors' petition from its bankers, Coutts. No one appeared on behalf of the company, of which the boxer had been a director and sole shareholder since 2002. The company was dissolved last September following completion of the liquidation. Obviously a misunderstanding.

'Slicker'

BOLD MACDONALD

THE financial crisis doesn't just hurt the better-known banks – Australian investment bank Macquarie has been hit too.

Macquarie, nicknamed "The Millionaire Factory" for the vast sums it paid its execs, made lots of its cash by buying up swathes of the public sector and PFI assets in Europe. The Macquarie European Infrastructure fund owns slices of Thames Water, police radio service Airwave and the M6 motorway. It even bought an ex-minister in the process, taking Labour's Lord Gus Macdonald on as European chairman.

Now all that debt-fuelled growth looks less attractive, with the value of its assets and profits both plummeting. An invitation reaches *Private Eye*, however, suggesting that Macdonald wants his bank to swim free of these troubles in the traditional City way: on a wave of champagne. This month Macquarie Infrastructure is inviting clients to a "Pol Roger champagne tasting hosted by Oz Clarke". This will not be gentle sipping – for three solid hours bankers and clients will be "comparing and contrasting the full range of Pol Roger champagnes, from Vintage to Sir Winston Churchill".

One wonders how staff at Macquarie's investments that have been cutting jobs, such as Airwave and Thames Water, will feel as the bank pours out the £125-a-bottle fizz.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

£17bn Cash given to Lloyds by government as it became UK's biggest bank by acquiring HBOS last year

£5.7bn Cash given to Lloyds by government as it prepared to shrink again by selling off hundreds of branches to meet EU competition rules last week

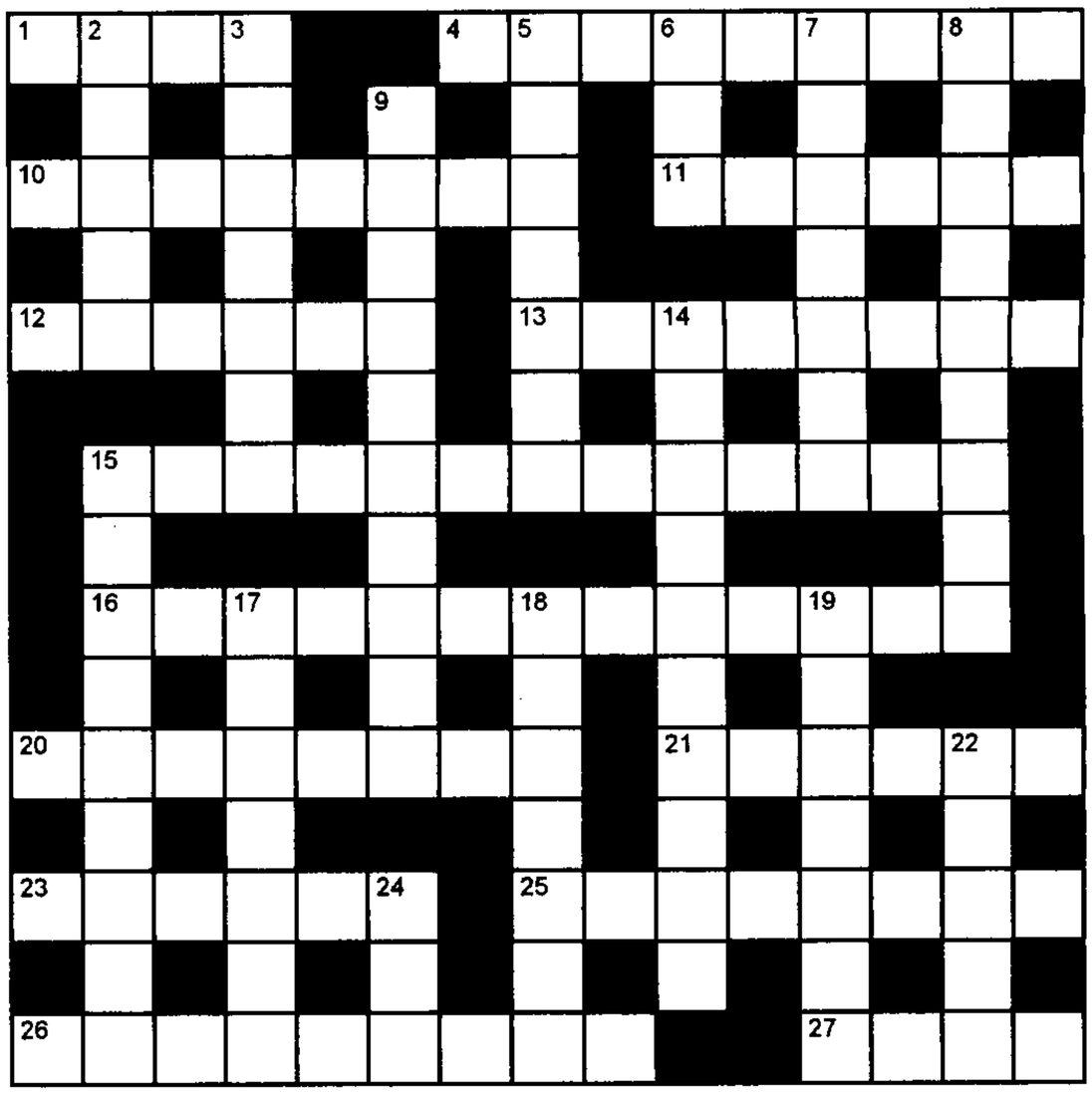
EYE CROSSWORD 404

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 20 November 2009

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk

(Many apologies for the non-appearance of Crossword 403 in the last *Eye*. The correct puzzle was published online at www.private-eye.co.uk)



ACROSS

1 See 22dn.
4 Poet: "Dolby is free – O, could it be?" (5,4)
10 Blair (not that is, one shielded by bum crazy fat kid) (8)
11 Doctor Death's first day entered in dossier (6)
12 Pair of tits, ones replaced with uranium implants, shouldn't be allowed (3-3)
13 Bum, almost round isn't wobbling – flaming criminal (8)
15 Skip, a non-moral bastard, perpetrator of minor violation (5,8)
16 One who fusses about Brenda, maybe, Sarah Palin? (4-2-7)
20/17 Novelist's dirty underwear cellar – not one on left (8,7)
21 Word processor gets Truss annoyed over the radio (6)
23 Jolly's after orifice – hide! (4,2)
25 "Matey" Blair's pissed with Coe – not right (8)
26 University goes in for bondage, bounding one drunk, from which gas and water are taken? (9)
27 See 24dn.

DOWN

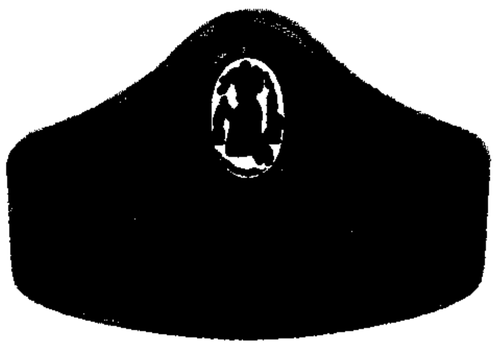
2 Old leader from old city with pecker in an erect state (5)
3 Jock about right, er, as a nut case? (7)
5 Complaint when useless Mandelson starts entering a blog (crappy) (7)
6 See 8dn.
7 News delivered by stupid gits covering row (7)
8/6 Quickly putting away spliff, go in, oh so dopey (9,3)
9 Failure to vote Lab (leader lacking, so intent on "spinning") (10)
14 Figures leader of Tories is implicated in something shocking with *Sun* (10)
15 Toss sailor (declared gay) and laugh uncontrollably? (4,5)
17 See 20ac.
18 Cyclops has grief from females, endlessly, holding the centre of their lives (3,2,2)
19 One politician for everyone to charge with treason? (7)
22/1 Shock condition of teararses when separated (5,4)
24/27 Head eating the rolled bogey (3,4)

Crossword 403 winner: SHARON BUESNEL (402 winner: ALEX CLAYTON)

ACROSS: 8 Stetson 9 Alfalfa 11 Margarine 12 Oddly 13 Budge 14 Copartner 16 Nose job 18 Lie back 21 Flatulent 23 Baths 24 Green 25 Eccentric 26 Rattled 27 Avenger.

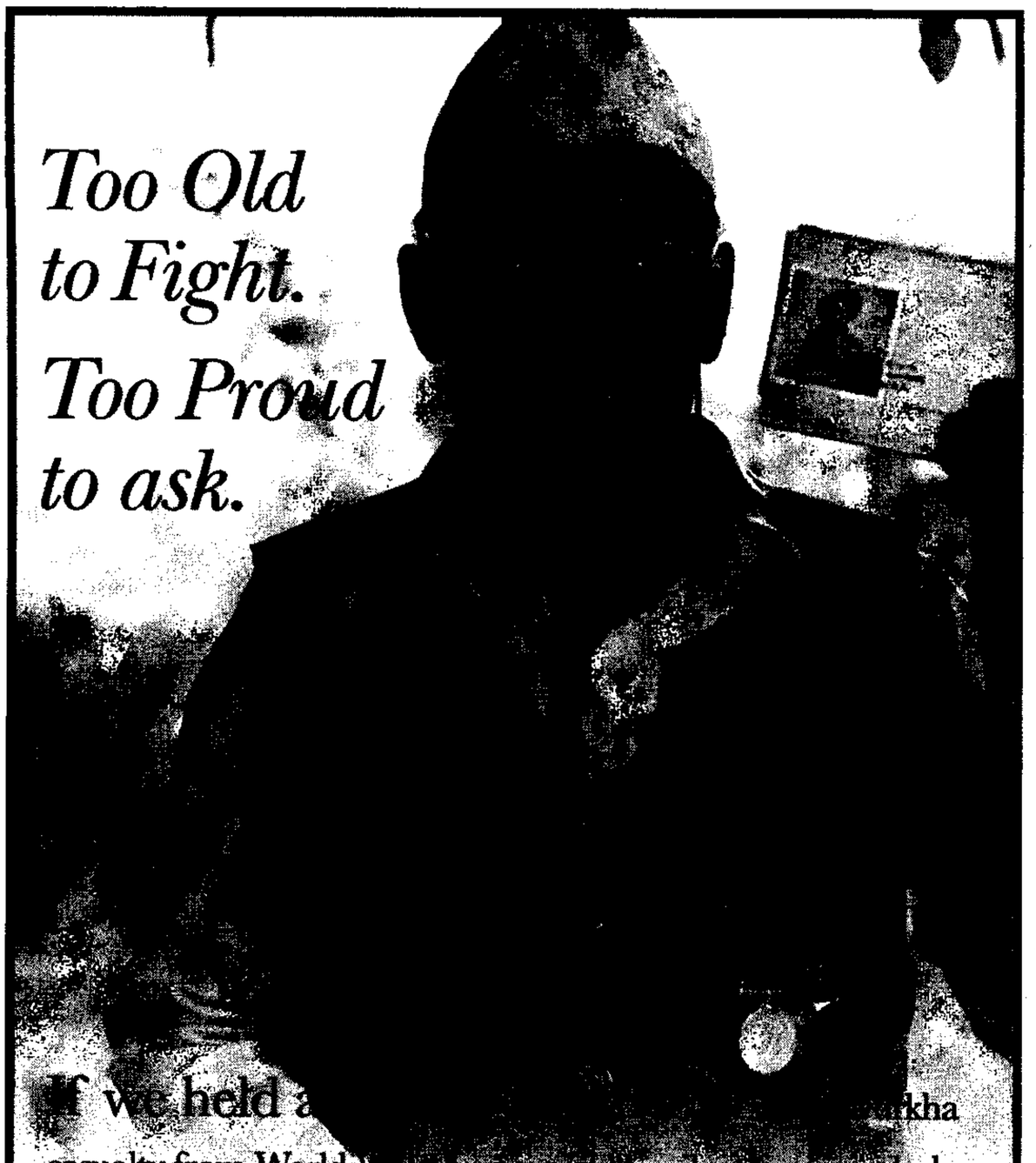
DOWN: 1/10 Osama Bin Laden 2 Hebrides 3/22 Estate agent 4 Invincible 5 Hate 6 Of course 7 Lawyer 15 Politician 17 Journals 19 Alter ego 20 Kiss curl 21 Figure 23 Banker 25 Ends.

HUSBAND



THE SIGN OF A BETTER PUB

www.theakstons.co.uk



If we held a [illegible] Gurkha casualty from World [illegible], we would be silent for two whole weeks. Since then, the courageous Gurkhas have stood by us in every major conflict.

The Gurkha Welfare Trust pays a welfare pension to 10,000 old soldiers or widows who don't qualify for Army pensions. Many fought valiantly in the World War II. Their Nepalese homeland is beautiful, a special place, but it is desperately poor. Now old and infirm, these brave people, to whom we owe so much, would be destitute without your help.

With £15, you will buy an old soldier or widow food and the necessities of life. Please be as generous as you can.

YES! I will stand with the Gurkhas

I will give: ☐ £15 ☐ £30 or ☐ £_____ (please indicate)
by cheque to The Gurkha Welfare Trust, or my debit/credit/CAF card
Card number:

_____ – _____ – _____ – _____ – ____

Exp.: ____ /____ CCV No.: _____ (3 digits on back)

Name _____

Address _____

_____

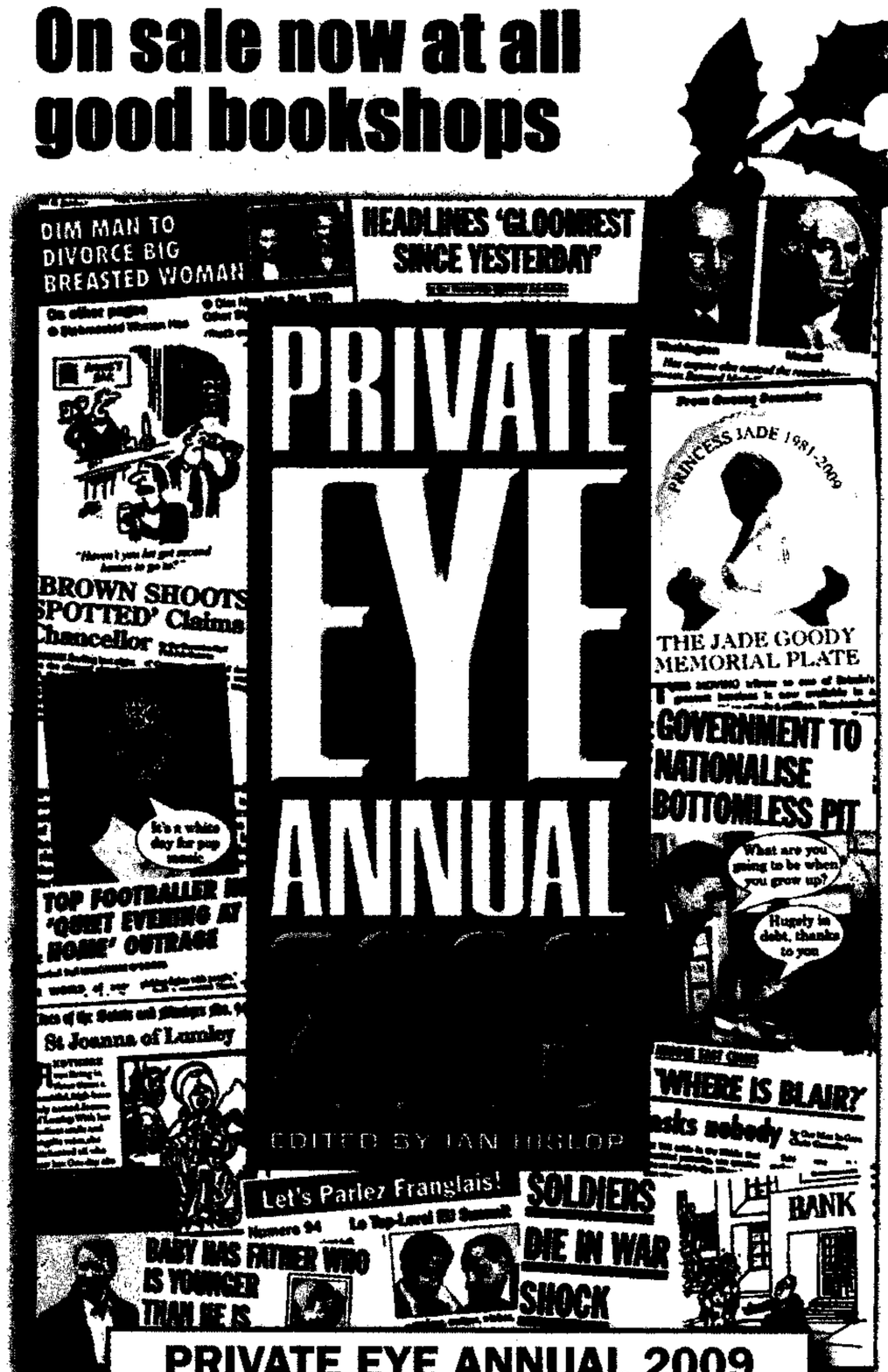
_____

_____ Postcode _____

THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST
Freepost RRUS-RGZG-YUCB, PO Box 2170,
Gurkha Welfare Trust, Salisbury SP2 2EX
Tel 01722 323955 www.gwt.org.uk
Registered Charity Number 1103669 PE21109

THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST

PRIVATE EYE
Christmas Books
On sale now at all good bookshops


DIM MAN TO DIVORCE BIG BREASTED WOMAN
HEADLINES 'GLOOMIEST SINCE YESTERDAY'
PRIVATE EYE ANNUAL
EDITED BY IAN HISLOP
BROWN SHOOTS 'SPOTTED' Claims Chancellor
TOP FOOTBALLER 'QUIET EVENING AT HOME' OUTRAGE
St Joanna of Lumley
PRINCESS JADE 1981-2009
THE JADE GOODY MEMORIAL PLATE
GOVERNMENT TO NATIONALISE BOTTOMLESS PIT
What are you going to be when you grow up?
Hugely in debt, thanks to you
'WHERE IS BLAIR?' asks nobody
Let's Parlez Franglais!
BABY HAS FATHER WHO IS YOUNGER THAN HE IS
SOLDIERS DIE IN WAR SHOCK
BANK

PRIVATE EYE ANNUAL 2009
£9.99 – ONLY £6.49 ONLINE AT WATERSTONES
YOU SAVE £3.50

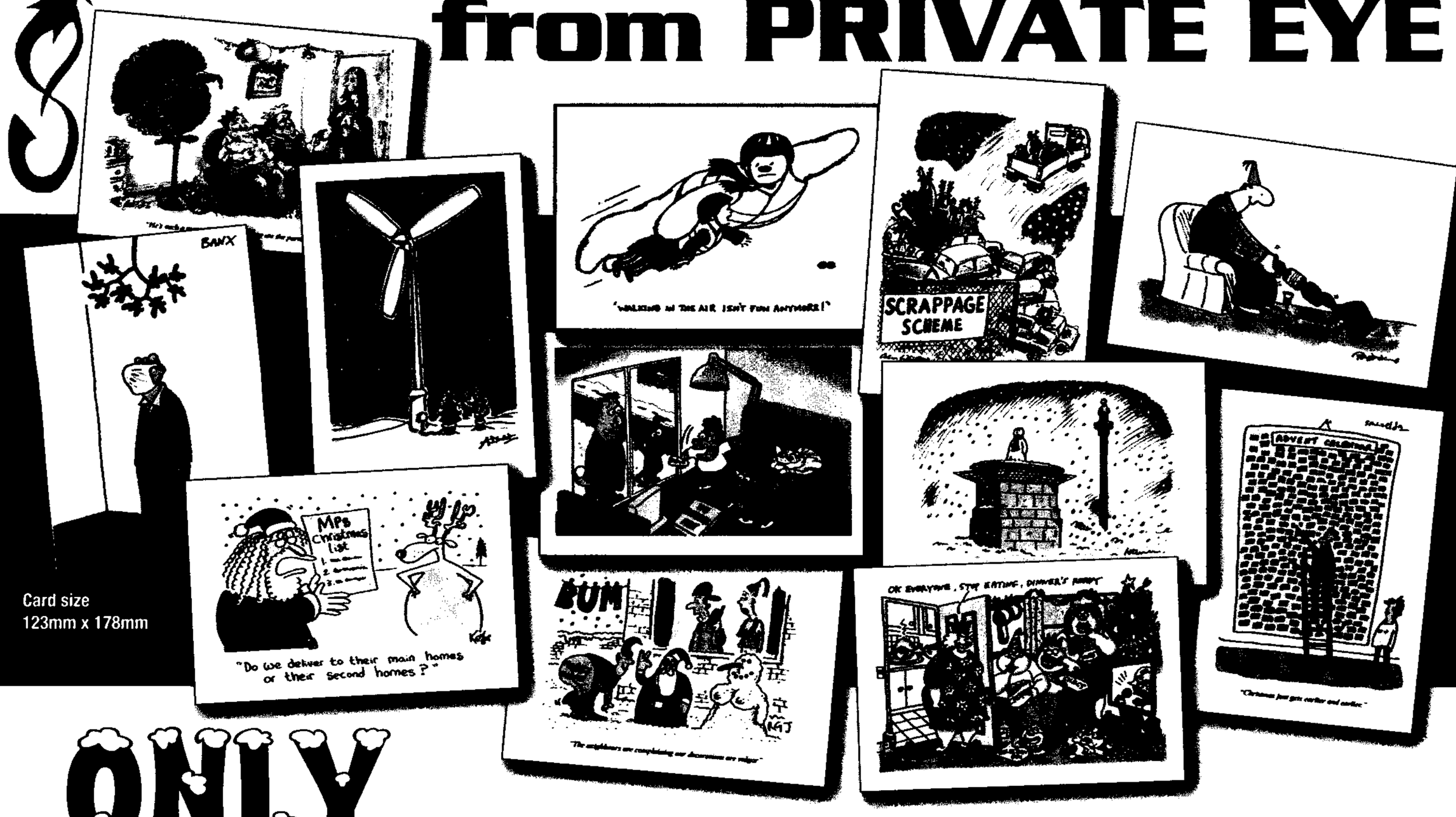
Ideal Christmas presents!

DUMB BRITAIN £4.99

W Waterstones.com

Buy online at www.Waterstones.com/privateeye

CHRISTMAS CARDS from PRIVATE EYE


BANX
"WALKING IN THE AIR ISN'T FUN ANYMORE!"
SCRAPPAGE SCHEME
MPs Christmas List
"Do we deliver to their main homes or their second homes?"
RUM
OK EVERYONE, STOP EATING, DINNER'S READY

Card size
123mm x 178mm

ONLY £8

- 12 new designs
- Each pack contains 12 Christmas cards plus envelopes
- Only £8 for the set of 12
- **MULTIBUY OFFER!** 2 packs for just £14 (Save £2)
- FREE p&p

HURRY!
Our cards are selling out fast. Order today to ensure delivery in time for Christmas.

Go online to view each card at www.eyexmas.co.uk. Don't forget our multibuy savings offer!

ORDER NOW! *at* www.subsonline.co.uk
or call 01795 414 870

BUY CARTOON CHRISTMAS CARDS FROM PRIVATE EYE (Source code CARDS1249)

☑ **Yes! Please send me...**

☐ 1 set of 12 cartoon Christmas cards – ONLY £8
☐ 2 sets (24 Christmas cards) – ONLY £14 (SAVE £2)
☐ 3 sets (36 Christmas cards) – ONLY £21 (SAVE £3)
☐ 4 sets (48 Christmas cards) – ONLY £28 (SAVE £4)

YOUR DETAILS

Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms Forename _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Don't miss out. We send our best offers by email. Private Eye is serious about protecting your privacy. We do not share or sell data about our subscribers.

YOUR PAYMENT DETAILS

❶ ☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to Private Eye

❷ ☐ Please charge £_____ to my:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

☐ Maestro (Issue No.)

Card Number ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Maestro only ☐☐☐

Valid from ☐☐ ☐☐ Expiry date ☐☐ ☐☐

Signature

Date

How to reply

Complete this form and send to:

Private Eye Christmas Cards,
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne,
Kent ME9 8FA

Call:
01795 414 870
(please quote source code below)
Overseas customers please call +44 (0) 1795 414 870

Online:
www.subsonline.co.uk

Please note our Christmas cards are very popular and we only print a limited stock. Orders must be received by 27th November to guarantee delivery of the cards before Christmas. Cards will be delivered within 14 days.

Source code CARDS1249

PRIVATE EYE

Advertise here and reach over 857,000 potential customers, it's so easy!
(Source: NRS, June 2009)

Display Advertising please call Odile Barclay on 020 7878 2366
Classified and Semi-Display Advertising please call Robert Grant on 020 7240 9129 / 020 7878 2308
Address for advertising opportunities is Ten Alps Media,
One New Oxford Street, High Holborn, London WC1A 1NU

www.eyeadvertise.co.uk **email: private-eye@tenalps.com**

£2.75 per word (£25 min charge). Centred box £15. Box number £15. For just £10 extra your ad can also appear on our website: **www.eyeadvertise.co.uk** All charges inc VAT

Would advertisers please note that copy deadline for Classified / Semi Display for 27th November issue will be 1pm, Tuesday 17th November

Would advertisers please note that copy deadline for Display for 27th November issue will be 5pm, Wednesday 18th November

Eye Wear

PUKKA PYJAMAS AND NIGHTSHIRTS for men, women and boys. www.pukkapyjamas.co.uk

Replying to a box number is as simple as sending a letter. just send your reply to Private Eye. One New Oxford Street. High Holborn, London WC1A 1NU . Remember to quote on your envelope the box number to which you are replying.

Eye to Eye

INTELLIGENT DATING ONLINE
Where minds matter, for Graduates of all years. www.ivorytowers.net

LOVING LINKS. UK's leading discreet adult dating service since 1994. Unique top level one-to-one matching service and fast online email system. Call David for a chat on 08456 440 919.

KCDATING
SPEED DATING for Grown – Ups - Sugar Daddies – Toy Boys & Cougars!
Book directly **ONLINE** for Nov. / Dec. events.
Nov. 25 LONDON (West End) **ages 35+** No upper age limit
Dec. 9 LONDON (West End) **Sugar Daddy Toy Boy & Cougar SPECIAL! Dress code: Smart.**
www.kcdating.co.uk
For individual bespoke **Private Client MATCHMAKING** arrangements covering London/Home Counties, South Coast & East Anglia. Please Tel. David Mintz on **01728 635 064** and **07986 213 120**

PERSON TO PERSON – non-internet magazine for new friends/partners. Est. 1984: still going 'cos it works! Details (Dept PE), PO BOX 40, Minehead TA24 5YS. Tel: 01643 709 509.

BEAU AND BELLES, high-end, bespoke introductions for men only. www.Beau-and-Belles.co.uk

WELL TRAVELLED MATURE LADY seeks a gentleman for an occasional adventure 07968 460 852

WONDERING WHERE ALL THE GOOD GUYS ARE? Are you a single woman, mid 20s – mid 30s, professional, university educated who feels that finding the right partner to share your life with is more of a priority than finding someone to start a family with? Then look no further. We are a bespoke, personalised introductions agency, established for over 25 years and we work like head hunters for our clients who pay our fees. There really is no fee for you and no catch – we are simply on the look out for the right kind of women to introduce to some of our very eligible men. Please contact Zara Heber Percy at the County Register,zara@thecountyregister.com, mobile 07957 395 366 website: www.thecountyregister.com

SINGLE ARMY OFFICER, 45-55, sought by ultra feminine, Monroe figured/blue eyed redhead, for LT-Relationship. Charbridgehouse@hotmail.co.uk

MALE SOCIAL COMPANION r eqd for lovely Devon based lady with affluent lifestyle. Active and youthful. Enjoys,bridge/music/travel. Seeks officer/ gentleman type, 75-85 as companion. Call: 0845 226 3189 or Jrh@rh-introductions.co.uk NO FEE reqd.

SINGLE IN THE MIDLANDS? www.WarwickshireDating.com

HARD-WORKING NURSE seeks less pressurized times ahead. Attractive, articulate good company. Wit and womanly warmth awaits. Telephone: 07765 050 305

EXECUTIVE ONLINE DATING. PROFESSIONALS ONLY. FREE to join/browse/mail. www.rhodesharveydating.co.uk

THE OVER FIFTIES DATING SITE www.onlineseniordates.com

RUSSIAN SINGLE INTRODUCTIONS. Meet your perfect Match. Call 01423 566 766 NOW!

CARIBBEAN BEAUTY QUEEN opened her dream English Country Pub and only just hanging in there. Seeking mature Knight in shining armour for financial guidance and mutually rewarding experiences. Mail eyeresponse@live.co.uk

THE COUNTRYSIDE DATING SITE: www.countrysidelove.co.uk

Eye Read

OUR FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY by John Strafford Visit www.historyofdemocracy.org.uk

DAN BROWN PROVIDES THE FICTION AROUND FREEMASONRY AND THE LAW. For the reality read Abuse by Plod. www.abusebyplod.com

POPULATION OR THE PLANET? New eco thriller MEME confronts the clash www.hal-a.com

Eye Novelties

STUFF YOUR STOCKINGS @www.gizmoandwidget.com Shopping for fun

TITLES-LORD, LADY ETC. Tel/Fax 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

Eye Travel

PLANNING AUTUMN / WINTER BREAK? Family Reunion, Romantic Getaway or Wedding? Find enchantment in your own paradise. Google "Eiko's Beach House."

www.roundtheworldflights.com – Design your own RTW eg UK Asia Australia NZ USA UK from £899 ATOL IATA

KIDS JOURNEY JOURNAL, critically creative activities for holidays £2.99 www.bit.ly/pe-journeyjournal

Eye Bet

HORSERACING TIPS. Tremendous WINNING record. No win,no pay. Free two day trial, quote EYE11 at www.highflyersracing.com/promo

ROULETTE WHEEL WANTED (single zero), 3 quarter or half size. 07967 226 614 phone or text

Eye Business

USING YOUR BANK? USE YOUR BRAIN! Unbeatable currency rates on international transfers and holiday money. www.interchangefx.co.uk 0800 1075 470

WANTED: Cafés/Bars to showcase new coffee. Send details/photos: newcafe@hotmail.co.uk

SAY NO TO OUR TAXES FUNDING BANKERS' OBSCENE BONUSES http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/capbonuses

CORPORATE INSURANCE SPEND over £500K? Fed up with brokers not delivering service? Then contact to discuss: john.loscombe@hollandbury.co.uk

GOT A BUSINESS OR PERSONAL DILEMMA YOU WANT TO RESOLVE? www.calmrise.com

Eye Charity

www.alexrmfoundation@org.uk

STUBS SUPPORTS INJURED SERVICEMEN AND SERVICE VETERANS. Donors, supporters and volunteers needed. Please visit www.stubs.org.uk or call 01494-811 500 for more information.

HELP SOPHIE BURTON RAISE MONEY FOR AFRICAN VILLAGE SUPPORT. (Registered Charity Number: 1106860) All donations welcome. Account Number: 99228966 Sort Code: 070030

Eye Buy/Sell

WE BUY PRE-63 EYES, OZ, IT Friends etc – underground@shoreditch.net

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100-£3000. Not a shop just a shed. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. TN12 5JB. Telephone 01622 871 353.

CREDIT CRUNCH BLUES? Don't go out and waste your precious pounds on expensive eateries. Make staying in fun by buying a fab new TV, home cinema system or hi-fi from us instead! We¹ve got the best prices in town. Call 0845 900 1230 for your nearest store or check out www.richersounds.com

BroomBroom.com – beautiful cars seek loving gnomes

STUCK FOR A GIFT? Choose from our wide range of jewellery boxes for women, men and children. Visit www.boxofjewels.co.uk

INDEPENDENTLY OWNED PROFITABLE LONDON COCKTAIL AND CHAMPAGNE BAR, 2 floors, late night license, professional 20s,30s,40s clientele with high proportion of champagne & cocktail sales. londonbar@hotmail.co.uk

OVER 700 RARE AND COLLECTABLE WHISKIES IN STOCK. Many gifts for whisky lovers. www.whiskyandwines.com/pe.

FOR SALE: Samos, Greece – large traditional townhouse on the island for lovers of walking, wildflowers and wine. Euros 310k. kirkby@rjrk.fsnet.co.uk

PE VOL 1 AND 2. V RARE (verified by Tony Rushton) good condition. highest offer call 07960 954 167

Eye Christmas

'THE LITTLE BOOK OF SUICIDE' – the perfect Christmas present at £4.99. 01494 772 557

FOR THE COOK, CHEF AND BAKER. For christmas. www.thesponco.com

BE DIFFERENT THIS FESTIVE SEASON. give your friend/relative an african hand made christmas card at only u$5. available on; www.engobeartstudio.com.

Christmas is coming

Get your message out to friends and loved ones now Call Robert Grant on 020 7878 2308

Or visit www.eyeadvertise.co.uk Eye Christmas Column

Eye Say

CARP POLITICIANS OR CRAP POLITICIANS. BANKERS OR BANKSTERS. www.bantheballot.co.uk

WIN GRAIG BROWN'S CLASSIC '1966 AND ALL THAT' at www.new-classics.co.uk

COGNOLOGS ARE CLEVER BRAIN FOOD. Originals available free from: www.vulpeculox.net

SHORT STORY WRITER AND ESSAYIST: new website www.markreece.co.uk

THE SOCIALIST PARTY AIMS AT BUILDING A MONEYLESS WORLD COMMUNITY based on common ownership and democratic control with production solely for use not profit. It opposes all leadership, all war. For 3 Free issues of our monthly Socialist Standard write to: The Socialist Party (PE), 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN. www.worldsocialism.org

Eye Law

HAVE YOU BEEN LET DOWN BY YOUR SOLICITORS OR DOES YOUR SOLICITOR LACK THAT CUTTING EDGE? Ahmud & Co. Solicitors, the lawyers that make a difference. www.ja-solicitors.com Tel: 020 8886 1111 or info@ja-solicitors.com No Legal Aid.

NO WIN NO FEE LITIGATION. call Chandler Harris LLP Solicitors 0161 834 2200 philip@chandlerharris.com

SOLICITORS NEGLIGENCE CLAIMS? Ring specialist solicitors 0121 200 1400 or wkhan@hma-law.co.uk

DIVORCED/DIVORCING? Defend your assets/income. Recession good opportunity. We fight your corner. Thirty years experience. Contact Divorce Dept, Pellmans, 1 Abbey Street, Eynsham, Oxford, OX29 4TB. Tel: 01865 884 400 mail@pellmans.co.uk

LET DOWN BY YOUR LAWYER, Accountant or another 'professional'? Cad-busting Solicitors generously offer no win, no fee terms. Freephone 0800 169 2133. www.halborg.com

YES, you can now come direct to a barrister. Tel: 020 7833 9625.

THE 'NO WIN – NO FEE' Specialists: Professional Negligence (www.proneg.co.uk). Disputed Wills & Employment Law (www.sblaw.co.uk). Accident Claims (www.newdeal-fairdeal.co.uk). Free case assessment. Telephone: 0808 155 6389.

Eye Help

FIT OPEN-MINDED PROFESSIONAL GUY, 50s, urgently needs £10k or £1.5K monthly. Anything considered. reliefworker69@googlemail.com

Eye Need

BRIGHT WARWICK GRADUATE seeks sponsorship to continue studying OU MSc Science with course S819 (Radiotherapy). I would love to work for you to repay your investment. alanvtaylor@mac.com

FIRST CLASS OXFORD GRADUATE with £20,044.22 student debt. Here's to you, Mr Blair. Recession-busting donations gratefully received. Halifax 11-08-38 0067637. max.cole88@gmail.com

ACCOUNTANT / Personal Assistant. To get your affairs into order. Available 2–4 days monthly or so. Retired & Can- do. Excellent references. Tel 020 8883 3061

PLEASE HELP, proud war pensioner reduced to begging. Career service, fixed income,illness,growing family equal growing debt. Thank you.God bless. Paul 07-01-16 27083688

HARD-WORKING MUM wants to avoid loan sharks this Christmas. Please help 09-01-27 38119659

EXCITING RAPIDLY EXPANDING NEW RECORD LABEL looking for a private investor.jordanne_young@hotmail.com

WWF VOLUNTEER seeks funds to take up overseas placement. All contributions welcome. hensby.matthew@googlemail.com

EYE'M SCREWED. Newly redundant, very scared word wrangler urgently needs £17k to avoid foraging in the street for scraps. Really. 16-00-38 10342594 BoX No 312147

£3000 NEEDED for yogic spiritual retreat to India (five months). Will say prayer for benefactors. Shonshu@hotmail.com.

Eye Services

PRIVATE LONDON CLINIC: (Moorgate/Old Street tubes) offers walk-in and postal sexual health services, online impotence treatment. Open evenings. Tel: 020 7490 8988. www.DrThom.com

VISITING SUIT TAILOR. Henry Herbert visits any time, any place. Suits £495. Overcoats £895. All Made in England. Telephone 020 7727 2485. Visit www.henryherbert.com

FIND ANYBODY: www.locateperson.net – James Black LL.B(Hons) expert private investigation, international +44 (0) 121 247 5550 and 07773 788 389.

SPEECH LOOMING? Relax, I'll write it for you! You're due to speak at a wedding/dinner/event. Don't waste time worrying. Lawrence 0207 681 8247 or www.greatspeechwriting.co.uk

STOP THE BUGGERS Professional Security Sweeps www.stopthebuggers.co.uk Email : info@stopthebuggers.co.uk Tel: 01342 719361

VAT PROBLEMS? Taxman on your case? Speak to Eamon McNicholas. www.EamonMcNicholas.com

DISCOVER AN ALTERNATIVE TO EXPENSIVE RECRUITMENT AGENCIES. For a huge choice of pre-screened candidates at a low cost. www.surfboardrecruitment.co.uk

NEW 'NO WIN, NO FEE' for professional negligence, debt, employment and will dispute claims by specialist Solicitors. Freephone 0800 169 2133. www.halborg.com

WWW.Tracingpeople.net info@tracingpeople.net Tel:- 01342 719361 Fax:- 01342 719 641

PERFECT ARM CANDY ALMOST ALL OCCASIONS: corporate, social m7box@live.co.uk 07758 386 692

LINK INVESTIGATIONS. The complete investigations agency www.linkinvestigations.co.uk 07733 325 488

SPEAK with style, stories and humour at social and business events. Call Brian Jenner 07976 720 705 www.thespeechwriter.co.uk

REPS/EXECS: Why be lonely in a hotel when you can have homely accommodation and pleasant company in The Forest of Dean? Text Faith on 0778 5266 033 for further details.

PROBLEMS? Emotional or personal - sympathetically and professionally addressed by counselling and/or hypnotherapy. Call Sally Elizabeth 07761 154 634 www.sallyelizabeth.co.uk

MAGICIAN/HYPNOTIST AVAILABLE FOR EVENTS/PARTIES - South England area - email magicalwonder@live.co.uk

TASTE THAT, LIVE! organic raw @ living food teaching chef (grezzo @ boston u,s,a) and nutrition consultant (n.h.f dip @clin.dip) booking places for 2010. alissa cohen level (3) 'living on live food' certified, can issue your level (2) (instructor) or level (1) (chef). learn how to shop for raw food, perform sprouting, detoxing, pickling, and candying. how to achieve best results from vita-mix, dehydrator, and juice extractor, for optimum health through raw, vegan and vegetarian diets. begin to unlock your inner health by speaking to me, kath.thorley m.a., on 0161-292-3003 / 07764 168 570

WEB SITE STARTER PACKAGES FROM £99. Contact: eyeservices@rencourtwebdesign.co.uk 07050 655 405 www.rencourtwebdesign.co.uk/

SLIDES/NEGATIVES onto CD/DVD. Digital photo restoration. Friendly, efficient service. www.digitiseyourphotos.co.uk

FULLY QUALIFIED FEMALE THERAPIST offers aromatherapy and massage. Central London. By appointment only. 0788 600 885.

MICROSOFT EXCEL Spreadsheets, Data Analysis, Databases, Models built to requirement and emailed. Remote working, confidential MBA financial analyst team, long experience blue-chip to start-ups. Satisfaction or no payment. After sales support. 07815 933517 jake@vetroconsulting.com

FILLING YOUR CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS?

Fill them to overflowing with a London Library gift membership

More than one million books, from the 16th century to the present day
850 magazine and periodical subscriptions
Take books home for as long as you need them
Beautiful, Wifi-equipped reading rooms in which to work or relax
The exclusive London Library Magazine delivered quarterly
Electronic resources, from academic journals to Who's Who online, accessible from any internet connection

Treat your favourite bibliophile to a year of bliss with London Library membership www.londonlibrary.co.uk/join

THE LONDON LIBRARY
Stacks of inspiration

LIVING WITH RUBBISH

Charlie and Chester - their sombre gaze tells all.

These poor horses were surviving in terrible conditions. Their field had very poor grazing and was dangerously littered with wire and metal rubbish. They were given little food or shelter and were extremely timid and unsure of anyone going near their legs or feet. Their hooves urgently needed trimming but Charlie was so scared, he had to be sedated for the work to be carried out.

Please help our humane work by sending the coupon, phoning or emailing for our colour Christmas Card and Gift leaflet and you can buy the new 2010 Calendar which has colour postcards of some of the animals at Bransby.

REG CHARITY NO.1075601

WE COLLECT USED POSTAGE STAMPS

Bransby Home of Rest for Horses, (Dept PY), Bransby, Lincoln LN1 2PH Tel: 01427 787657
E: mail@bransbyhorses.co.uk W: www.bransbyhorses.co.uk
Please send me your Christmas Card and Gift Leaflet.

Name: (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms) _____

Address: (Capitals Please) _____

_____

_____ Post Code _____

Sandstorm Kenya originally made luxury tents for East Africa's leading safari camps. Today we use the same traditional skills and materials to make travel bags and accessories in Kenya to the same high quality 'safari-grade' specification.

SANDSTORM

See our full range & buy at www.sandstormkenya.com

SAFARI GRADE

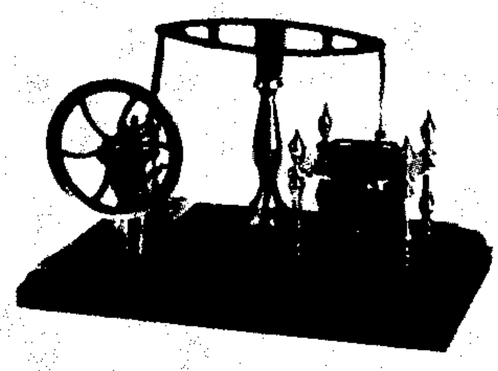
ENGRAVED STATIONERY

Engraved – or die-stamped – printing, in which the text is printed from a copper die and raised from the paper, is the best type of printing there is and from shops in Bond Street it is very expensive. However, not only is the same stationery purchased from us surprisingly affordable, it will also be printed for you by the man who printed it for Buckingham Palace and the House of Commons.

Call **01962 738492** for a brochure and samples or order online at **www.leemingbrothers.co.uk**.

LEEMING BROTHERS - SWAN COTTAGE OLD ALRESFORD - HANTS - SO24 9DZ

The First Electric Motors
Build an Historic Model Engine Kit



A range of fully working engines

Based on original designs from 1836 – 1860, Electro-magnetic and working on batteries, these model kits represent how the early pioneers tried to use steam engine design for the world's first electric engines.

www.oldmodels.co.uk
01243 575403

CHAPMAN

HAND CRAFTED CANVAS BAGS
MADE IN ENGLAND

www.chapmanbags.com
+44 (0)1228 514514

APPLEBY ASSOCIATES
Executive Career Consultants

LOST CONTROL OF YOUR CAREER?

Regain the initiative today.

Book a free career review meeting.

www.Appleby Associates.com
0845 66 55 215

Luxury Weathervane Calendar

A wry appreciation of 12 handheld, horticultural and building haulage carriers captured within a Luxury Calendar for 2010!

Last Available Luxury Shed Luxury Caravan Luxury Boat Luxury Shed Luxury Mooring Calendars £7.99 Last Available Transglobal Emporium P.O. Box Surrey Mail Order Tel: 0845 871 8811

www.transglobal-emporium.com

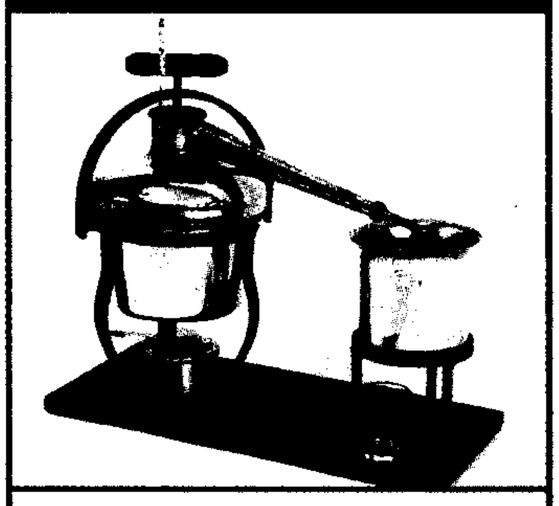
...to save time, assume I know everything...

The Present Finder
Request Mail Order Catalogue
01935 815195

1,600

www.presentfinder.co.uk

Copper Pot Still



Scale model working still

www.vigostills.co.uk
01404 892101

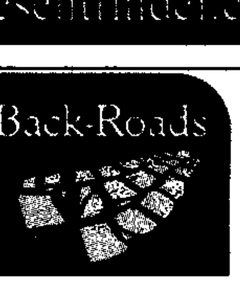
Eye-opener!

you'll be delighted to discover

By subscription only
01323 431313

Serious fun!

Back-Roads



EVER THOUGHT OF BEING A GUIDE ?

Back-Roads Touring specialises in small group tours in the UK & Europe. We pride ourselves on our personal and flexible touring style, taking our clients off the tourist trail to those lesser known regional gems. We are looking for educated and resourceful people-orientated individuals who possess strong communication skills and would be interested in joining our team of professional guides over the summer months. Ideally you will possess a good regional knowledge of the UK and/or Europe and have an interest and enthusiasm for local history and culture.

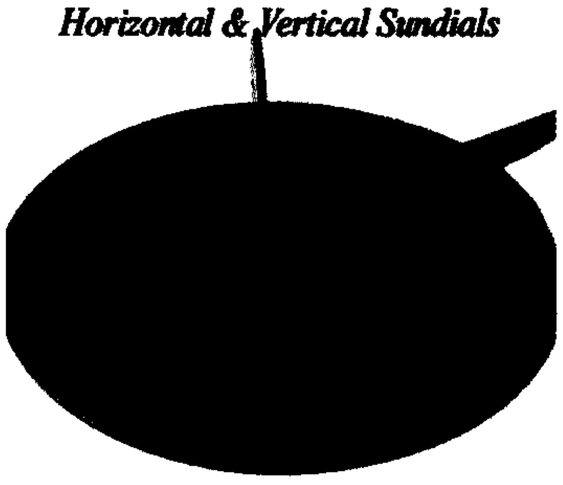
You would be retained seasonally on a self-employed basis as a Driver-Guide, taking parties of up to 16 passengers aboard one of our Mercedes mini-coaches. A PCV class D1 driving licence is required and we arrange subsidised driver training courses to assist you.

Visit our website:
www.backroadstouring.co.uk

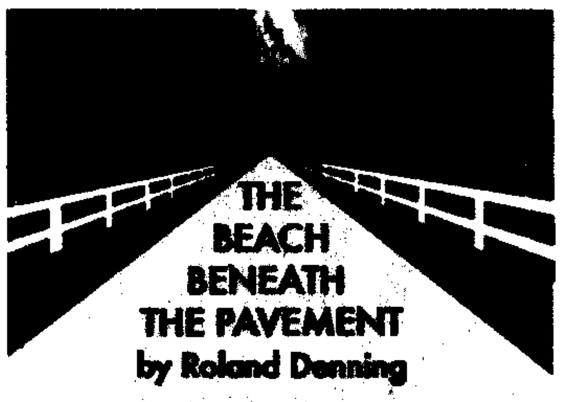
To apply:
Send your CV to
jane@backroadstouring.co.uk

Lost out due to bad advice?
Why don't you sue your accountant/solicitor /surveyor?
Contact GORVINS on 0800 015 9986 or email enquiries@gorvins.com

Border Sundials
PERSONALISED BRASS SUNDIALS
Armillary Spheres, Horizontal & Vertical Sundials



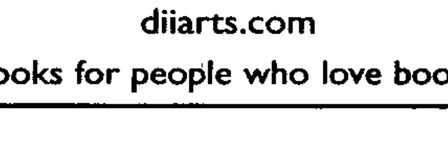
Tel: 01873 737 545
www.bordersundials.co.uk



'Shamefully funny. Bloody funny. Very, very funny...' 'an extravagant philosophical satire, a dark comedy with a whiff of post-modernism...'
For sample chapters and to find out more:

www.beachbeneathpavement.co.uk

sofa.com



order now for a comfy christmas

for reader offers visit www.sofa.com/eye

0800 988 6689

Who must I kill to get published?

diiarts.com

Books for people who love books

To book your advert online go to **www.eyeadvertise.co.uk**

Brennan JB7

Good news for CD owners

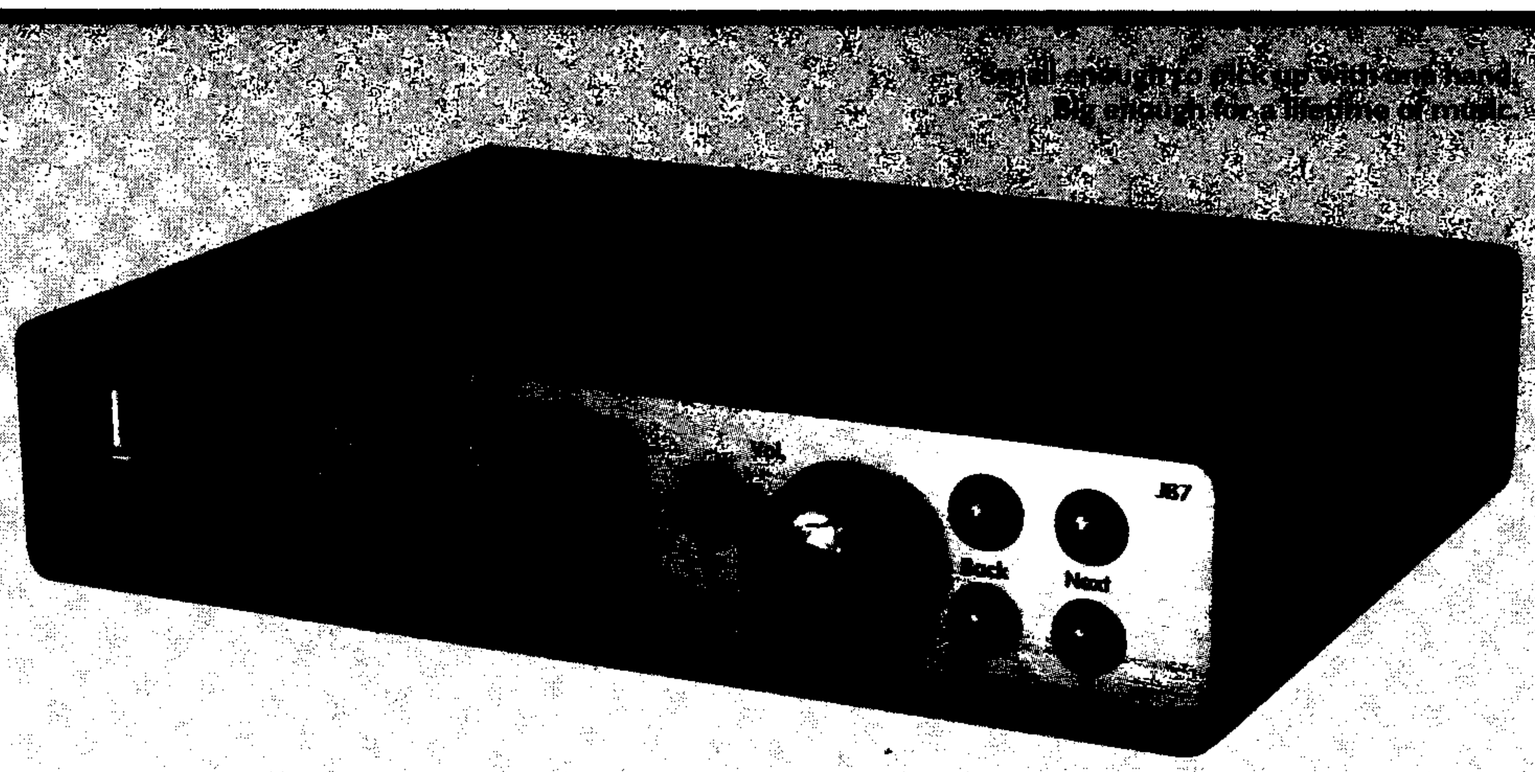
British company re-invents the HiFi

"Mr Brennan you are a genius. The JB7 is truly a wonderful thing. I have only owned mine for two days but already it feels like an old friend. I admire its simplicity of operation, its range of functions, its unobtrusive size, and the quality of sound simply delights me. It's all I could wish for. Thank you. Kind Regards"

When Martin Brennan designed the Brennan JB7 he threw out the rule book. The Brennan is a CD player with a hard disk that stores up to 5,000 CDs. It saves space and clutter and delivers near immediate access to an entire music collection. Customers rediscover/fall in love with their music again simply because the Brennan makes it so accessible.

The Brennan also records from vinyl and cassette so you can enjoy your entire music collection but keep it out of the way in another room or retire it to the attic.

You can use the JB7 in two ways. You can use it with loudspeakers or you can play it through your existing HiFi. The Brennan gives names to tracks and albums from a database of 2.6 million CDs as you load each CD. It takes a few minutes to load a CD.



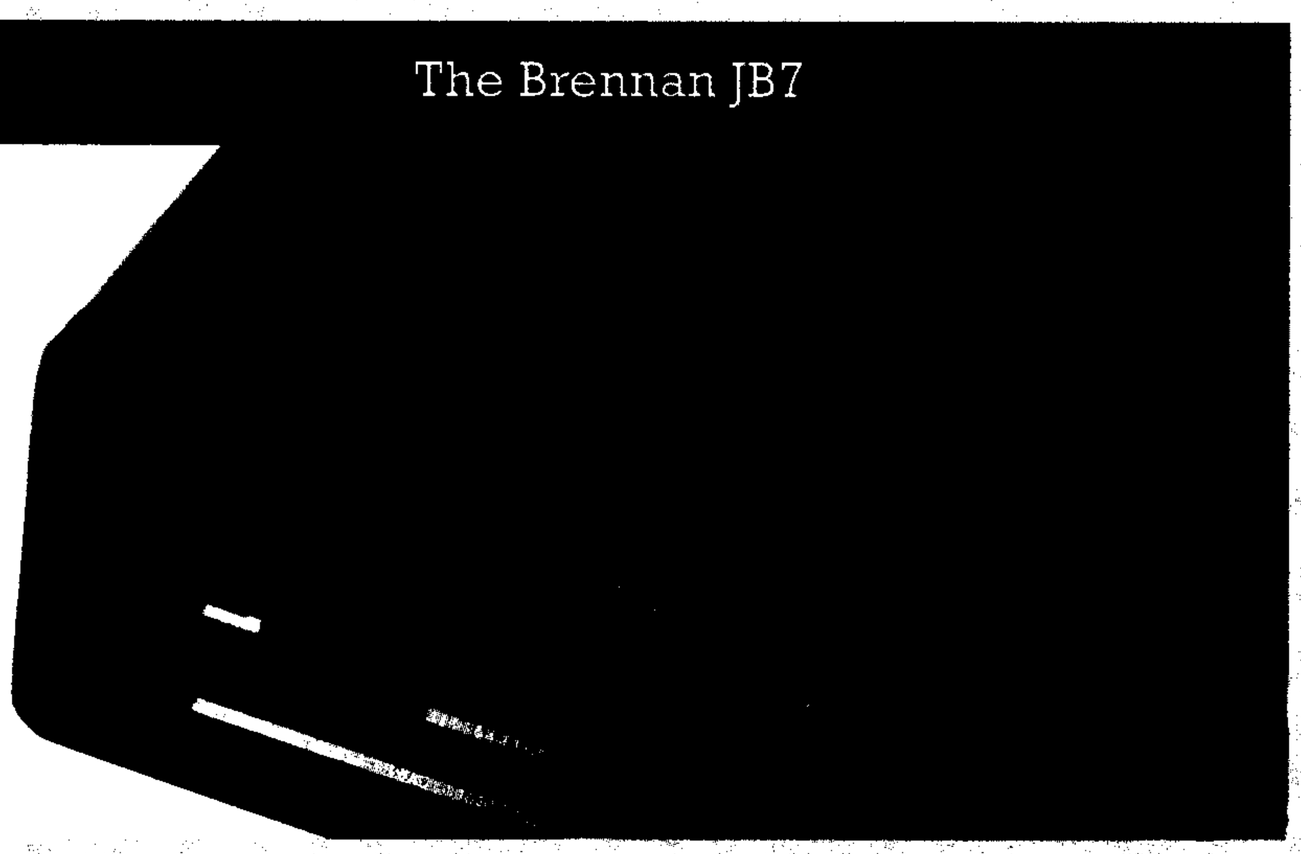
The Brennan has a unique text search facility that shows a reducing number of matches as you press successive letters on the remote control. Once you get the hang of it you can find one track or album out of your entire music collection in a few seconds. So to find "Nessun Dorma" you would press letters "NES" or "DOR" and scroll through the shortlist of matches.

What's the point owning CDs you don't Play?

What's the point in owning hundreds of CDs worth thousands of pounds if you never listen to them? The problem with CDs is that it's quicker to make a cup of coffee than dip into a CD. Try timing how long it takes to pick a CD, load it in the CD player, play a snippet from a track or two, eject it and put it back where it came from. Then there is the problem of finding music. The print on a CD spine is tiny. What if the track is on a compilation CD? What if the CD is in the car? Then there is the clutter. You need to keep your CDs near the player or you wont play them. So you are forced to share your living space with hundreds of cheap plastic boxes.

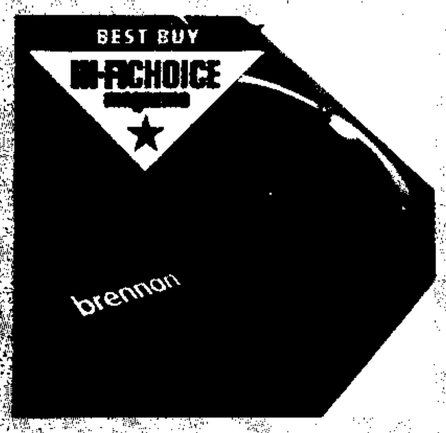
CDs are great but they are also inconvenient, inaccessible and a bit of a chore - thats why Martin Brennan designed the Brennan JB7.

The Brennan JB7



The face behind Brennan

Martin Brennan



Key Points

Three sizes - up to 5000 CDs

• One button plays the entire collection at random • Text search finds tracks/ albums/ artists in seconds • Browse albums by spinning the volume knob • Display tracks by name as they play • Load CDs in about four minutes • 2.6 million album database - updated monthly • Seven rainbow colour coded playlists •180 x 32 soft scrolling vacuum fluorescent display • Segue function blends one track into the next • One touch record from vinyl, cassette or radio • Loads and plays MP3 from USB • Remote control or front panel • Volume knob pushes to use as a selector • Delete tracks you don't like • Clock with alarm • 60 Watt power amplifier • 4.8 x 16 x 22 cm steel and aluminium construction • Small and tough enough if you are on the move • Used by restaurants, hotels, pubs, dentists, schools • Sold to more than 30 Countries • Backup music to external USB hard disk for safe keeping • "Superb" - Gramophone • "Best Buy" - HiFi Choice • "Huge fun to use...a great talking point" - Daily Mail • Choice of colours Navy Blue or Gun Metal • Optional matching loudspeakers • Prices from £329

"Huge fun to use... a great talking point"
Daily Mail

Martin is a physicist and computer engineer. He has around twenty silicon chips to his name, written over a million lines of computer code and co-designed the world's first 64 bit games computer.

"I always liked the promise of CDs. It wasn't so much the quality but the quick access to a given track. After vinyl and cassette that was a real plus. My first CD player was a five CD multi changer. My second was a ten CD changer for the car. I liked the idea of quick access to more than one CD and music that didn't repeat after 40 minutes. These players were fine but a bit clunky - there were several seconds of silence between CDs and in the car I could never find the right CD.

A few years ago I had a go at loading my cassette collection onto a PC. Cassette were obsolete but I owned around 100 and the music on them reflected an important period in my life. I recorded all of the cassettes on to the PC over a period of several weeks.

The thing is I never listened to the music on the PC. Somehow using the computer to listen to music never worked out. Maybe the computer was in the wrong place but I think it lacked the immediacy of a physical play button. In the end the computer got a virus and the music files were lost - I still had the cassettes thankfully. The JB7 is really my personal ideal music player".

To get the whole story and order visit www.brennan.co.uk

"TELEGRAM FROM THE QUEEN FOR MR WITAN"

wisdom

Oh yes, we are one hundred years old and we've never been fitter.
Find out how you could add vigour and vitality to your
investments by contacting Witan today.

Witan investment trust

0800 082 81 80 | www.witan.com quoting ref. 6241

Witan Investment Trust is an equity investment. Please remember, past performance is not a guide to future performance, and the value of your shares and the income from them can rise and fall, so you may not get back the amount originally invested. Issued and approved by Witan Investment Services Limited. Witan Investment Services Limited is registered in England no. 5272533 of 201 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3AE. Witan Investment Services Limited provides investment products and services and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Calls may be recorded for our mutual protection and to improve customer service.

9 770032 888129 45